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COMMONWEAL

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture

October 12, 2001

The Origins of the UN Declaration of Human Rights

Mary Ann Glendon

Can We Measure Belief in the 'Real Presence'?

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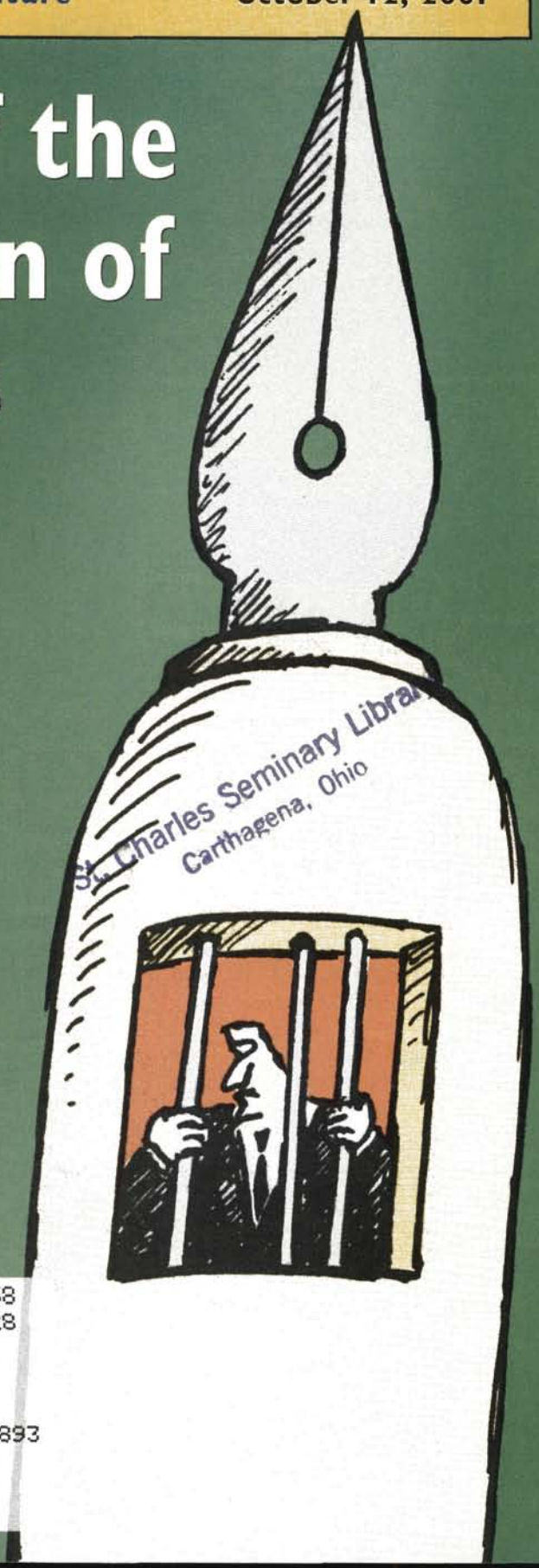
John Garvey



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To the Editors

Disrespect

Your disrespectful attitude toward the United States and the president is sad ["September 11, 2001," editorial, September 28].

BRIAN R. MCGINNIS
Macomb, Mich.

Respect

When I got my September 28 issue, as usual, I could not do anything else until I had at least read the editorial. Then I read Grant Gallicho's Notebook, the four contributors in Short Takes, Patrick Jordan in the Last Word. Great job! *Commonweal* is definitely one of my beacons in this world. I am proud to be a subscriber.

RUSS PATE
Dallas, Tex.

Ethics & opportunity

Robert E. White's thoughtful and analytical response to "What Kind of War?" [September 28] lays out the basis for an ethical defense against terrorism.

As the president continues to shape the national response to terrorism, he would do well to develop further several of White's points . For example, working closely with moderate Arab states to address the legitimate grievances of communities from which terrorists are drawn should be a basic component of our "war on terrorism." And the U.S. Information Agency and Voice of America are poised to spread the word about the new international climate that White sees as necessary to gain the cooperation of the world.

We will be successful if we can recognize and properly utilize the opportunity that flows from this horrible tragedy.

FRANCIS X. CUNNINGHAM
Arlington, Va.

What we stand for

The U.S. response to the attacks of September 11 should reflect our nature as a country that respects human dignity and rights. First, we must assist those devastated by the attacks. Second, we must take measures to make it less likely that such attacks will take place in the future. Third, we must seek out, identify, and punish those responsible.

Our response must clearly distinguish us from our attackers who kill indiscriminately in service of their "cause." We stand for human rights, for justice, for presumption of innocence, for protection of civilians—or we stand for nothing.

E. THOMAS MCCARTHY
MARY C. MCCARTHY
Berkeley, Calif.

Middle East peace

Yes, of course, we should pursue and punish the terrorists responsible for the horrible attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, taking care not to harm innocent women and children, while trying not to make more terrorists and enemies; we should also insist that every other civilized nation do its part. Yes, of course, we should tighten our borders and our immigration policies, strengthen our security at airports and on commercial airplanes, and improve our surveillance of aliens who are a potential threat to the United States (there's a big difference between "information" and "intelligence," isn't there?). In addition, our leaders should be asking whether it is a prudent foreign policy for the United States to provide arms and other assistance to groups like the Taliban in Afghanistan, which turn around and become our enemy a short time later.

Last but not least, after more than fifty years of human-rights violations, terrorism, and warfare, it seems clear that the Israelis and Palestinians are unable to make peace by themselves. As one person recently remarked on the radio: "If killing terrorists brought peace, then Israel would be the most peaceful nation in the world." Therefore, a United Nations tribunal should impose binding arbitration to resolve this conflict; a UN peacekeeping force should separate the two sides until such time as they can treat each other with mutual respect and decency, as equal members of the human family. Once a just peace is achieved in the Middle East, 85 percent of the world's terrorism will disappear.

ANTHONY J. DISTEFANO
Alexandria, Va.

Wise & true

Regarding "Axioms of Faith" [September 14]: What a beautiful essay, wise and true. Thank you, Anna Nussbaum, and thank you, *Commonweal*, for making it available to us.

KATHARINE BYRNE
Chicago, Ill.

Praise for Anna

On September 13, while taking a moment of respite from the news coverage, I happened to read Anna Nussbaum's "Axioms of Faith." Its clarity of thought held me from the first word to the last. Thank you, Anna.

I have sent copies to my four adult children. In a world of "fragile peace and broken promises," they are trying to foster in their own children what Anna has. Anna's are words of support.

MARY A. CHAFFEE
Toledo, Ohio

Hispanic Catholics

Thanks for Timothy Matovina's "Hispanic Catholics" [September 14]. It is very important that we welcome our co-religionists from Mexico and Latin America.

As a historian, I appreciated the reference to the Spanish settlement of Saint Augustine, Florida, in 1513, as well as the comparisons to European-

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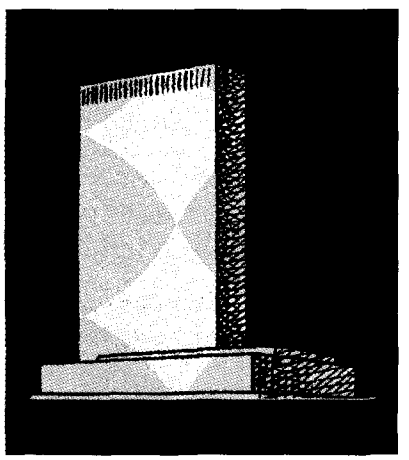

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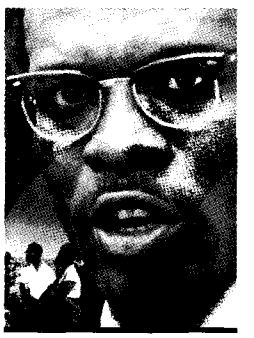

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nationality parishes of an earlier era. There is much to be gained from such an analysis.

There are also valuable lessons to be learned from a new examination of the pioneering work of Archbishop Robert E. Lucy of San Antonio, who was for many years the head of the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish Speaking. He began working in the forties to make dioceses across the country more inviting to Spanish speakers. He also used his authority to support unionization of immigrant workers and to encourage Mexican Americans to vote.

All this is to say that an outstretched hand and good liturgy aren't the only ways to welcome our Latino brothers and sisters. Solidarity in their daily struggles is also important.

KENNETH C. BURT
Sacramento, Calif.

Russell's shoulders

Concerning Bertrand Russell ["He Didn't Add Up," September 28]: While Wittgenstein may have created the aura of doubt about *Principia Mathematica*'s ambition to create a consistent and complete account of arithmetic, it was Kurt Gödel who drove the mathematical stake through the book's heart. Gödel's incompleteness theorem is one of the most important human achievements ever. (It is rendered entertaining and accessible by Douglas Hofstadter in his *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid.*) *Principia Mathematica* is the giant on whose shoulders Gödel reached that achievement, and it is a sad thing if Russell couldn't rejoice in his participation in reaching that truth.

STEPHEN SCHAEFER
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Honoring the dead

As a recent subscriber and as a student of Japan's constitutional law and politics, I was surprised and delighted to read Barry Hillenbrand's piece on the complexity of war remembrance in Japan ["No Easy Choices," September 14]. Japan has the world's second ranked economy and is our most important Asian ally, but generally the U.S. mass media provide poor or no coverage of Japan's fascinating constitutional debates. Since World War II, Japan has had a hard time meeting the universal human need to mourn the dead (in Japan's case, about 2.5 million war dead) without stirring up Asian memories of Japanese actions in the 1930s and 1940s. Hillenbrand does an unusually competent job of sorting out key elements in the situation. In 2001, Japan's government is considering possible ways of depoliticizing mourning, for example, establishing a purely secular national monument or cemetery and figuring out ways to mourn even the war criminals in a humane manner with no suggestion of approving wartime aggression or atrocities.

Actually, since 1945 no major nation has had more peaceable international relations than Japan under its constitutional renunciation of war (Article 9). Thinking of mourning the war dead, shouldn't we do something more to remember the more than 2 million Vietnamese war dead to balance out our understandable sorrow at sixty thousand U.S. casualties in the Vietnam War? (And a glance at Korea's losses in the Korean War should not be out of the question.) Enemies meet after death, no longer enemies, no longer Americans or Japanese or Afghans.

LAWRENCE W. BEER
Boulder, Colo.

Beef found

I write to concur with Maurice Timothy Reidy's "Where's the Beef?" [September 14]. I spent fourteen years as rector of a residence hall at the University of Notre Dame, where I made it my priority to promote the spiritual and the intellectual, and the seeking of peace and justice among the three hundred resident college men. This priority was expressed in such ways as inviting speakers (like Richard McCormick, S.J.); establishing an in-house library with more sophisticated periodicals such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Commonweal*, and *America*; sponsoring a fall and spring forum on peace and justice issues. Yes, we even had Helen Prejean as a speaker, before she became famous. All these efforts were always made with the students involved in the arrangements and coordination. Our Sunday liturgies were also oriented with these priorities in mind. I was acutely aware of the Opus Dei presence and the questionable ways their members enticed our brighter, simple, and pious students. The more mature and thinking student avoided them. Much more could be said about the growth of Opus Dei and its influence.

While serious and extensive effort is made to expand them intellectually, today's college students are under great pressure to succeed with high grades in order to gain graduate and professional school acceptance and high-salaried positions. My years with today's college students in a quality institution tell me that, in spite of the pressure to excel, it is worth the effort to entice them to a unified, intellectual, spiritual, and peace-and-justice-seeking Catholic stance. This would certainly be the essence of Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University*, and, more recently, in the person and works of Flannery O'Connor.

(BRO.) BONAVENTURE SCULLY, C.F.X.
Takoma Park, Md.

Ensoulment

I'm no theologian, just an eighty-five-year-old retired internist and retired permanent deacon of our beloved church. Because of a background in embryology and hematology, the present embryonic stem-cell controversy stimulated me to send this let-

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Burying the dead

Two weeks after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said that the rescue efforts would continue but it was unlikely that, short of a miracle, more survivors would be found. Given the intensity of the fires fed by jet fuel and the speed of the twin towers' collapse, it is also unlikely that many of the dead will be found. Few intact bodies have been extracted from the rubble. The New York City medical examiner's office, nonetheless, has said that it will work to identify and return to grieving families the remains of the dead. The task is immense. More than six thousand people are missing, while only 152 of those found dead had been identified as of September 24, the day of the mayor's statement.

This mammoth undertaking is conceivable because DNA matching by high-speed computers can be carried out on relatively small tissue samples. To that end, rescue and recovery operations at the World Trade Center are sifting the debris for body parts while families and physicians are turning over dental records, tissue samples, toothbrushes, and other personal items that may provide the match to the recovered remains. Given the level of destruction and the emergence of other critical needs, this painful, complex, and costly effort could seem grotesque; yet, given the wound to so many families, such an undertaking has come to seem utterly necessary.

Even so, the scale of the medical examiner's effort in New York is nearly impossible to grasp. That's why a brief account in the *New York Times* (September 22), of the parallel work of the coroner in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, helps bring the work into human perspective. Shanksville is the crash site of the fourth hijacked plane, United Flight 93, apparently thwarted in its terrorist mission by passengers who seized control of the plane before it could strike its target. The giant 757, carrying forty-four people, crashed at 500 miles an hour into a reclaimed strip mine. Wallace E. Miller, the coroner, arrived as the fires were being doused. He saw neither blood nor bodies. It was as if, he said, "the passengers had been dropped off somewhere." Nonetheless, he is doing his best to identify the remains that are being sorted from the debris. He hopes, he says, to give each family a sealed coffin with the remains he is working so hard to identify.

Miller is also the local undertaker and seems to have both an intuitive and mystical sense of how critically important his work is. "People all the time want to see remains," he says, "no matter how horribly disfigured they may be. It's incredible, the power of that." He regards the crash site as sacred ground and says a prayer there each day. Of his own efforts, he says, "You're working out of respect for the memory of that soul and for the families. I grieve more for the families that miss the person. I believe the souls are better off."

The medical examiner's office in New York City is unlikely to express itself in that kind of language, but those forensic scientists and Coroner Miller both make possible an essential act of familial and communal piety, burying the dead. The wailing of the pipes, the weeping of widows and widowers, mothers and fathers, the cries of thousands and thousands of children will ripple through the city and its suburbs, through parishes and congregations, across the land and around the

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world—more than sixty countries are represented among the missing. Burying the dead and lamenting their departure is among the oldest of human responsibilities and instincts—so Antigone affirms in burying her brother Polynices, defying the command of the king, "I gave reverence to what claims reverence."

A terrible price is being exacted for these terrorist attacks in all of the families and friendships broken by deaths so horrible and unexpected. Nor does the suffering end there. Just in the narrow confines of Manhattan, thousands of people, often the lowest paid workers, have been laid off. Across the country, uncertainty and a weakening economy will take its toll—and so will all those measures designed to prevent further terrorist attacks. The terrorists may have achieved far more than they could have imagined. That is why the American response is so important.

In his September 20 address to Congress, President George W. Bush, said "Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done." Justice must be done. Exactly how that will be accomplished remains unclear, and is likely to remain so for some time to come.

The administration's rhetoric has become more measured since the days following the attack. The president's speech seemed more congruent with a long, intense, and complex international police action than with the "crusade" he called for early on. He has promised to "meet violence with patient justice." And, we hope, prudent justice.

There is a lesson to be drawn from September 11—a lesson that blessedly few Americans have ever had to learn. This may not be a war in the traditional understanding of the term, but we have suffered grave civilian casualties. Now we know that civilian casualties happen to real people and leave behind unbearable suffering. We should guard against inflicting it on others.

OF SEVERAL MINDS

JOHN GARVEY

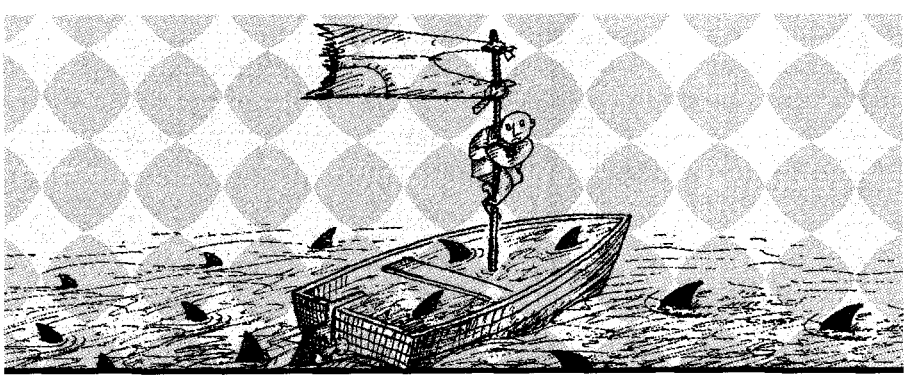
A BEAUTIFUL DAY

A horrible event

On September 11, I heard that a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers, and thought it was a terrible accident; within minutes another plane sliced through the other tower, and we all knew that it was not.

The light and air on the day of the attack were beautiful. I was reminded of a chilling passage in Endo's *Silence*. During the persecution of Christians in Japan a priest is told that unless he renounces his faith, those he has been serving will be drowned, one by one; and as they are dying, Endo makes a point of the fact that the day was beautiful. The birds sing, a breeze is blowing, the trees are lovely.

I live in eastern Queens. When I looked west down the Long Island Expressway I could see the horizon full of smoke. My wife called to say that she probably couldn't make it home from Manhattan that evening; the subways she needed weren't running. She spent the night in Harlem with friends. It wasn't an easy night to be alone, but I was glad she was safe. When I woke late at night I heard an airplane, and knew it was a military plane. I realized that this was an unusual thought for an American to have.



A couple of days later the streets in our neighborhood were filled with the smell of burning and a haze that stung the eyes, blown in from lower Manhattan. I thought of the attention to breath that is important in meditation practice, and wondered as I breathed not only what I was breathing in, but who. When I mentioned this to my sister she said, "There's something sacramental about that," and it is a dark truth.

The small Orthodox church I serve as pastor is usually full on Sundays. The Sunday following the horror it was packed. We were lucky, in a way; no one in our congregation was lost. But we do have members who know people who were. Almost any words said in the face of this sort of evil sound pale and trivial. All I could think to say was that while we can't help being obsessed by this mystery of evil, by the hardness of the hearts behind it, there are also mysteries of goodness. There was the heroism of the firefighters and rescue workers; there were the people who lined up to donate blood in such numbers that the system could not accommodate them; there was the fact that so many of those final phone calls, from the towers and from the planes, were not calls for vengeance, but final declarations of love; and while there are nervousness and anxiety on the streets, there is also a tenderness I have never seen

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before. Gandhi said somewhere that what we usually regard as history is a history of failures, a history of human beings behaving in disastrous ways; but the truer history of the human race is the daily fact of cooperation, help, and even love. That was apparent in many ways after the attack.

The Sunday following the disaster was, on the Orthodox calendar, the Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross. It occurred to me that on this side of the grave the cross is the most obvious fact: human beings suffer and die. It is not a small thing that while all the Gospels describe the crucifixion of Jesus, not one describes the Resurrection. This must be understood by faith. We are shown the empty tomb; we do not see him rising in glory. When he appears to the disciples at Emmaus the risen Lord appears as a stranger. There is nothing obvious about the Resurrection, nothing easily seen or grasped; the cross is all too obvious, and we can be stopped by it, we can think that this is all there is to life. Faith in the Resurrection does not cancel out what happens on the cross; the cross is its beginning. Archbishop Anastasios of Albania has said that the Resurrection begins *in* the cross, and this is where our faith must be, especially in a time when we are confronted with evil and hatred on such a massive level.

It is not, however, a faith that on this side of death everything will be all right. We know more than ever how small and vulnerable we are. And while the vulnerability can make us more tender, it can also make us want to strike out.

While some response is clearly called for, if it involves innocent civilians it will harden not only the hearts of our enemies, but our own. As I drove to church toward the end of the week I saw a few planes in the sky and had two emotions at once: things are returning to some sort of normality; and I felt a deep foreboding, one I feel every time I see an airplane now. One woman in our congregation told me that she found it hard to pray after this horror. I thought of Saint Paul's words about the truest prayer: the Holy Spirit prays in us, with groans too deep for utterance. That's how we are praying now. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS

PAUL BAUMANN

MY SON THE BOY SCOUT

Does he belong to a bigoted organization?

I had a brief but calamitous career as a Boy Scout. When I was in eighth grade my family moved from Connecticut to Ohio. In an effort to integrate us into our new community, my brother and I were enrolled in the Scouts. We had never been Cub Scouts; Little League baseball and other organized sports filled most of our spare time. I don't remember much about my initiation into scouting, but I do remember one soggy weekend wandering around smoky campfires among hordes of other scouts, all of whom seemed to have mastered the arcane knowledge needed for survival far from the baseball field and the television set. During my brief scouting career, knot tying proved utterly baffling, building fires was something I associated with delinquents, and the idea of spending the night in a leaky tent rather than in my comfy bed seemed like a step backward in evolutionary development.

Happily, we moved again within the year, and I resumed my career as a ballplayer and never again had to worry about building a campfire. Besides, there are too many bugs and the sanitation facilities in the great outdoors are appalling.

However, I've changed my mind about scouting, if not about the great outdoors. My son, Nick, is on the verge of becoming an Eagle Scout, scouting's highest rank. Nick likes nothing better than cooking over an open fire, forging up the side of a mountain, or paddling a canoe hour after hour. He found the sort of camaraderie and shared purpose in scouting that I discovered in the gym. I once spent a weekend with Nick and his troop climbing a few of New Hampshire's White Mountains. When we returned to our "base camp," I collapsed onto a bunk, certain that death was near. Nick and his fellow scouts never stopped carousing, but also managed to cook dinner and tend to everything else while I snoozed. Like other liberal types, I had had suspicions about the supposed "militarism" of the Scouts. But Nick's experience has broadened my view. I have been especially impressed with how the older boys take responsibility for the younger ones. I have also been impressed by the Scouts' magnanimous spirit. Every boy, whatever his skill, geekiness, or idiosyncrasy, has a place in the group.

The Boy Scouts have come under a storm of criticism since the Supreme Court ruled last year that the organization had the right to exclude openly homosexual scoutmasters. If you read the *New York Times*, you'd think the Boy Scouts were the new John Birch Society, or possibly an ally of the Vatican. A recent issue of *Newsweek* (August 6) suggested the Scouts are determined to "discriminate" come hell, high water, or reduction of government subsidies. Homophobic, bigoted, intolerant. In short, no place for kids.

As a parent, I worry about such accusations. I've asked Nick if the Boy Scouts' policy has been discussed in his troop. Not often, he says. Nick is not sure he agrees with the policy of excluding openly gay scoutmasters, and I find it a difficult issue myself. He says media reports that the Scouts want to exclude gay boys are nonsense. Aside from the difficulty of determining the so-called "sexual preference" of an eleven- or twelve- or thirteen-year-old, the idea of a witch-hunt for gay kids is as absurd as it is grotesque. In fact, the adults who have led Nick's troops are far more conventionally "liberal" than Nick is, and he enjoys arguing with them. Whatever the Scouts' official policy, it has been my experience that all the boys, even those who might stereotypically be considered "gay," are treated with respect. As best I can tell, the Boy Scouts are far

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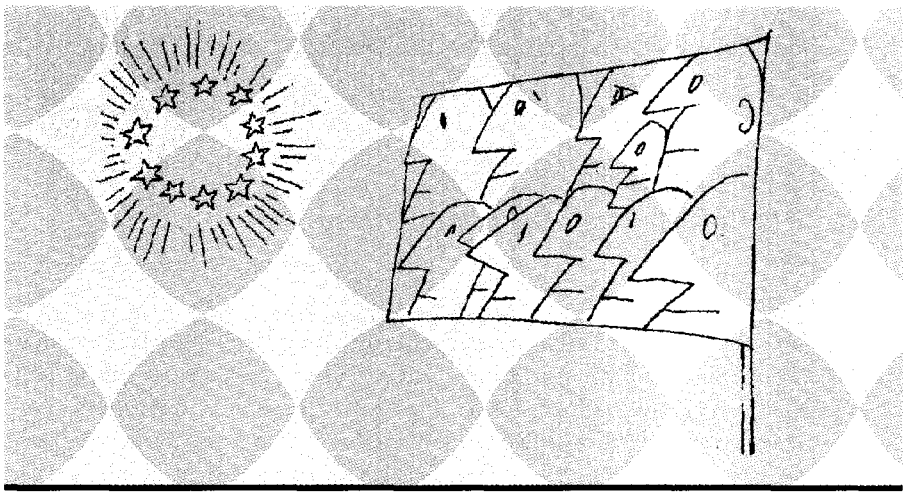

more tolerant than the sport teams of my adolescence.

Should the Scouts have the right to exclude openly gay scoutmasters? I think the associational freedom of such private groups is important and legitimate. For many religious people, the immorality of same-sex relations (and extra- and premarital relations, for that matter) is a question of basic sexual morality, not unmotivated prejudice. The fashionable contempt with which such views are dismissed as some sort of irrational sexual fear is unthinking and intolerant itself. I confess that I'm not sure how society should recognize same-sex relationships (let alone bisexual and transgendered people). I think it is good that such private sexual conduct has been decriminalized, but whether this sexual revolution is deepening our moral sensibilities or merely extending the "value-free" zone of indifference is less clear. Nor is it clear how these new sexual realities should affect the socialization of children.

If the Scouts eventually change their policy, it should be their decision, not something forced on them by the courts or the politically correct. The inflammatory rhetoric of the conflict was fresh in my mind during one of Nick's annual troop picnics. Participating in the amusingly "wholesome" event, I found it implausible that the Boy Scouts were a fount of prejudice and invidious discrimination. Of course I could be wrong about how history will judge these questions, and in thirty years my hesitation and fence-straddling may look no better than the apologetics of Southern segregationists do now. Still, my sense is that even those eager for the full acceptance of homosexuality should welcome the Boy Scouts' efforts to uphold a moral standard, even a possibly errant one. Without such institutions of moral education, persuading people of the rightness and necessity of moral change is impossible, and all we are left with is coercion or force. Martin Luther King Jr. was not wrong, it seems to me, in thinking that the ultimate success of the civil rights movement rested on a belief in the moral decency of his opponents. □

Julia Vitullo-Martin

RIGHTS & FREEDOMS

Public safety in New York

As National Guard troops in battle dress marched through downtown streets in the days after the destruction of the World Trade Center, New Yorkers asked one another whether this was the future. Was their wounded city—the symbolic capital of the globalized economy—to be patrolled by rifle-carrying soldiers, much like some besieged third-world capital? President George W. Bush's address to the nation on September 21 made this possibility even more real when he warned: "We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans."

In past criminal crises, the federal government has shown a fairly light touch in New York, treating the city and its police department with the respect normally due a sovereign. Indeed, while touring the ruins of the World Trade Center, Bush seemed to defer to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani as guest to host. During the president's address to Congress, Giuliani was seated to the left of Laura Bush, the highest placement in social terms.

But the days of federal deference to New York may soon be over. A safe America requires a safe New York—no president can permit New York to remain an island. But every increment in security will come at a cost, and the costs will be social and political as well as financial. They will threaten to undermine the city's very being and sense of itself as freewheeling, entrepreneurial, and invincible. New York had spent the nineties fighting crime and remaking itself into the most desirable city in the world. Or as urban historian Fred Siegel says, "The success of the nineties was pushing fear out of public spaces. That fear has now come back in a new form."

New York's strategic problem will be safeguarding itself effectively and efficiently—tackling public fear while minimizing inconveniences to routine life. But who is now in charge of New York? And who will make the crucial and potentially damaging security choices—Washington or New York?

No one thinks that the FBI, based in Washington with a staff drawn from around the country, can direct security in New York better than the New York police (NYPD). But the bombing of the Trade Center shows that ensuring New York's safety cannot be an exclusively local function. The FBI and the NYPD will have to work these matters through—and it probably won't be pretty.

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The NYPD, however, is stronger than it has been in years. In these days of crisis, the police have performed heroically and professionally. They have been on duty round the clock, a reassuring, protective presence. In the first days of the crisis, crime plummeted 34 percent over the same week last year—a tribute to the cops and perhaps to some decency even among criminals.

At least twenty-three police officers are missing in the collapse of the twin towers, most from the elite Emergency Service Unit. All were (presumed) killed while trying to rescue others. The Fire Department lost more than three hundred men. A popular T-shirt shows a police officer and a fire fighter standing beneath the words: The New Twin Towers.

But the security problems that lie ahead will put the NYPD under far more pressure than at any time in history. For the police will have to think through the right balance of security and efficiency in everyday life.

The New York public had already become accustomed to extensive measures deterring the common thug—metal detectors, photo IDs, bag searches, checks of electronic equipment. The screening devices are often primitive and the training of the personnel poor, but routine security checks prevent some crime and perhaps some terrorism in courthouses, museums, libraries, and most large office buildings. The twin towers themselves had a highly sophisticated security system managed by well-trained personnel.

Accustomed as they may be to routine security lines, New Yorkers are far less amenable to what the security trade calls Israeli tactics—traffic-stopping checkpoints, intrusive questioning, random identification checks, intimate searches, and racial profiling. These are ostensibly meant to deter crime. But they are also meant to remind the public often and aggressively of the presence of terrorists in their midst and to get the public to accept the authority of the police and military. In the Israeli system, police and military authority trump all other authority, as issues of safety come to trump all other issues, including economic ones.

Former Police Commissioner Howard Safir actually introduced a few of these tactics to New York, and Commissioner Bernard Kerik has continued them. Traffic-stopping checkpoints ostensibly for drunk driving or seat-belt use were first used in upper Manhattan and minority neighborhoods. After an outcry about racial profiling, Safir expanded the checkpoints to Manhattan neighborhoods below 96th Street. Huge swathes of important streets, like Third Avenue—a main artery on the East Side—would simply be shut down unexpectedly during prime hours, and all cars funneled through a narrow point. Large numbers of uniformed cops stood around as New Yorkers fumed helplessly. The inconvenience accompanying Israeli tactics is deliberate.

The pedestrian-controlling barriers introduced by Giuliani and Safir in 1998 to prevent jaywalking and improve the flow of vehicular traffic also represent an Israeli tactic—a reengineering to encourage people to go only where they are directed and to accustom the public to accepting restrictions on their movements. Defiant New Yorkers were routinely ticketed and forced to appear in court.

Since the Trade Center bombing, most streets with police precincts or fire houses have been closed to traffic, causing enormous disruptions in their neighborhoods. East 66th Street, for example, a major crosstown artery, is shut down at Third Avenue for one block. Crosstown buses must now make their way north to 72nd Street and across two blocks to the once-sacrosanct Park Avenue, where trucks and buses had been forbidden.

The most important question among all these tactics is, however, do they make the city safer? The evidence is not in, in part, because security tactics are almost impossible to evaluate rigorously. Fred Siegel, for one, thinks New York will be fine in the end because the high quality of New York policing will make the city far more secure than other places. London survived the IRA bombings, and Paris the Algerian terrorists, he notes.

Numb in their sadness, New Yorkers will survive the bombing—and will likely revert to old form, questioning every new restriction on their freedom. They have their natural combativeness to help them out, plus a fury against what Bush called the evildoers. The Bronx coat of arms says it all: *No cede malis*. Don't give in to evil. □

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Margaret Davidson

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

Are we ready?

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, a shaken nation struggles to get back on its feet, but with the grim realization that its enemy ignores the recognized rules for waging war. Fear increasingly focuses on the possibility that such an enemy might one day turn to biological weapons. On September 24, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a warning that modern technology has made it possible for terrorists to kill millions of people with biological or chemical weapons. Even though the threat is small, WHO said, the potential effects are devastating. Recent news reports that the terrorists who attacked New York and Washington had made inquiries about crop-dusting planes underline the danger.

It is a threat that the United States has been slow to engage, perhaps because the use of such weapons has been too terrifying to contemplate. In the last year, various levels of government have staged mock crises and devoted considerable time and money to preparing emergency personnel for such attacks. Still, our leaders have failed adequately to provide the medical vaccines and treatments needed to pro-

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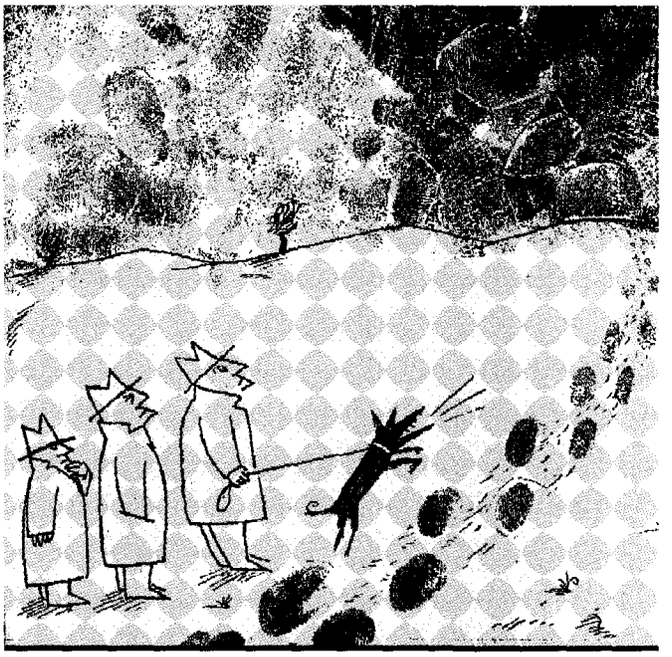

tect both civilians and the military against potential deadly bacteria, viruses, and toxins. Sent forth to ferret out the shadowy terrorists, U.S. troops would go woefully unprotected against biological weapons.

The threat is not new. A decade ago, personnel deployed to the Persian Gulf faced potential stockpiles of Saddam Hussein's biological weapons but were largely unshielded against them. (Iraq later admitted to UNSCOM that it had produced 8,500 liters of concentrated anthrax bacillus and 19,400 liters of concentrated botulinum toxin, which could have afflicted thousands.) In August 1990, an intelligence warning went out: "Iraq, the first nation to use nerve agents on the battlefield, probably would not hesitate to use BW [biological warfare] agents in extreme situations." The same month, the decision was made to vaccinate our troops against anthrax and botulism. But the response was too little and too late.

The Department of Defense (DOD) arranged with a single lab, the Michigan Department of Public Health, to provide the needed vaccines. When it realized that a single producer could not meet such a demand, DOD scrambled to generate an adequate supply. Project Badger, a tri-service task force, was initiated to find additional suppliers, but it turned out that commercial manufacturers were not interested. Lacking enough anthrax vaccine to go around, the U.S. Central Command then allocated doses to those personnel thought to be at greatest risk of exposure. As a result, only about one hundred and fifty thousand out of nearly seven hundred thousand troops who headed to the Persian Gulf received one or more doses of the anthrax vaccine, and an estimated eight thousand received one shot of the botulism vaccine.

It is questionable how much protection even these shots provided. A large portion of the military personnel didn't get them until early 1991 when they were already in the Gulf, too late for the full recommended regimen. Anthrax shots were to be reduced to two injections about two weeks apart, in the hope that this would provide at least partial immunity. (Food and Drug Administration [FDA] guidelines call for six anthrax shots over an eighteen-month period; its botulism vaccine schedule is three shots in twelve weeks.) Even with those lowered doses, vaccine supplies proved insufficient and anxiety quickly developed among those not on the priority list.

Military leaders later acknowledged the seriousness of the problem in a secret after-action report. Even though the threat and countermeasures were well known long before Desert Storm/Desert Shield, a 1991 Central Command report declassified in 1996 says that "the United States Army Medical Department was ill-prepared for medical defense against biological warfare agents." The full extent of this failure is difficult to determine because many service members' medical records were found, on investigation, to be missing or incomplete. It seems DOD failed not only to protect its troops against biological weapons but—either out of an attempt to cover up its shortcomings or out of just plain negligence—to keep the required records.

That was a decade ago. Today, little has changed. Experts now estimate there may be as many as fifty or more agents that are potential biological weapons, yet DOD only requires that military personnel be vaccinated against anthrax. Only one U.S. lab makes the vaccine—the same Michigan lab that produced the vaccine for the Gulf War, now owned by a company called BioPort Corporation—which has not yet been able to comply with FDA guidelines. As a result, release of new anthrax vaccine has come to a halt.

Furthermore, vaccines against a large number of other potential biological agents have never been developed or remain strictly in the research stage.

The time has come, then, for acknowledging our failures and considering a fast-track Manhattan-style project to develop and produce vaccines. The Defense Advanced Research Project Agency is supporting some innovative responses to the problem. But research related to biological weapons is often controversial because of the fine line between offensive and defensive work, as illustrated by the recent controversy over a government proposal to genetically engineer an especially potent anthrax-causing bacterium in order to assess whether the current vaccine would be effective.

Even if we are fortunate enough never to face a future where biological agents are used against us, research efforts could dramatically contribute to the treatment and prevention of disease at a time when emerging diseases are a growing threat. Furthermore, the attacks of September 11 are a chilling reminder that changing times demand changing responses. The United States must now take seriously the threat of a potential enemy who might employ lethal viruses and bacteria. □

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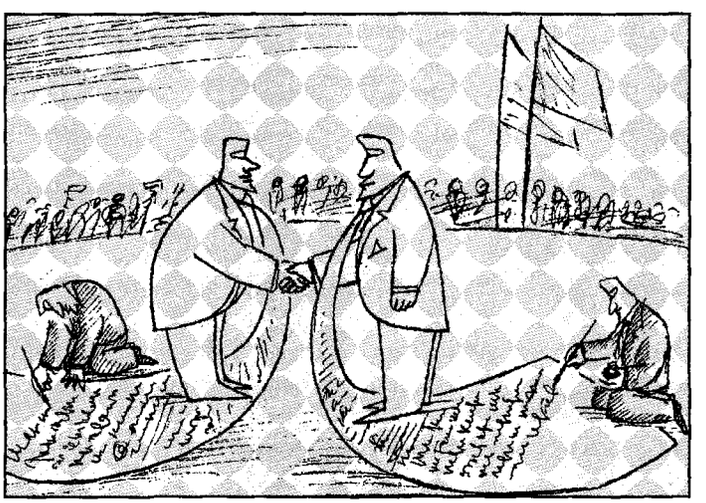
THE SOURCES OF 'RIGHTS TALK'

Some are Catholic

Mary Ann Glendon

On December 10, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). There were no dissenting votes, although the Soviet bloc, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa recorded abstentions. The Declaration quickly became the principal inspiration of the postwar international human-rights movement; the model for the majority of rights instruments in the world—over ninety in all; and it serves today as the single most important reference point for discussions of human rights in international settings.

If you are like most Americans, and like me before I got interested in the Declaration, you probably do not stay up nights thinking about the United Nations and its various pronouncements. But what I discovered about the history of the Declaration in doing research for my book, *A World Made New*, should be of particular interest to Catholics as well as to all those concerned about protecting human rights. Let me begin with a little background.



During World War II, the idea began to percolate that there should be some kind of international bill of rights—a common standard to which all nations could aspire—and by which they could measure their own and each other's progress. One of the first suggestions came from Pope Pius XII, who, in a June 1941 radio address, called for an international bill recognizing the rights that flowed from the dignity of the person. Another came from the British writer H.G. Wells in a little pamphlet subtitled, "What Are We Fighting For?" But in practical terms, the most consequential support came from several Latin American countries, which composed twenty-one of the original fifty-five member nations of the UN when it was founded in 1945.

Largely due to the insistence of the Latin Americans, joined by other small nations, the UN established a Human Rights Commission composed of members from eighteen different countries. It was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt who was just then making a new life for herself after the death of her husband. When the Human Rights Commission set to work in early 1947, its first major task was to draft a "bill of rights" to which persons of all nations and cultures could subscribe. But that assignment rested upon a couple of problematic assumptions: no one really knew whether there were any such common principles, or what they might be. So UNESCO asked a group of philosophers—some well known in the West, like Jacques Maritain, and others from Confucian, Hindu, and Muslim countries—to examine the question. These philosophers sent a questionnaire to still more leading thinkers, from Mahatma Gandhi to Teilhard de Chardin, and in due course, they reported that, somewhat to their surprise, they had found that there were a few common standards of decency that were widely shared, though not always formulated in the language of rights. Their conclusion was that this practical consensus was enough to enable the project to go forward.

The judgment of the philosophers was borne out by the experience of the delegates on the Human Rights Commission. This group, too, was highly diverse, but they had few disagreements over the content of the Declaration. Their disputes were chiefly political, and mainly involved the Soviet Union and the United States hurling accusations of hypocrisy against each other.

The framers of the UDHR, like legal drafters everywhere, had done a good deal of copying. They drew many provisions from existing constitutions and rights instruments. They relied most heavily on two draft proposals for international bills that were themselves based on extensive cross-national research. One of these proposals was prepared under

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the auspices of the American Law Institute, and the other was a Latin American document that became the 1948 Bogotá Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.

The final draft was a synthesis drawn from many sources—and thus a document that differed in many ways from our familiar Anglo-American rights instruments—most noticeably in its inclusion of social and economic rights, and in its express acknowledgment that rights are subject to duties and limitations. It also differed from socialist charters, notably with its strong emphasis on political and civil liberties.

Several features of the Declaration set it apart from *both* Anglo-American and Soviet-bloc documents, and these should be kept in mind as contests over the meanings of the Declaration's provisions continue. Consider the following: its pervasive emphasis on the "inherent dignity" and "worth of the human person"; the affirmation that the human person is "endowed with reason and conscience"; the right to form trade unions; the worker's right to just remuneration for himself and his family; the recognition of the family as the "natural and fundamental group unit of society" entitled as such to "protection by society and the state"; the prior right of parents to choose the education of their children; and a provision that motherhood and childhood are entitled to "special care and assistance."

Where did those ideas come from? The immediate source was the twentieth-century constitutions of many Latin American and continental European countries. But where did the Latin Americans and continental Europeans get them? The proximate answer to that question is: mainly from the programs of political parties, parties of a type that did not exist in the United States, Britain, or the Soviet bloc, namely, Christian Democratic and Christian Social parties.

And where did the politicians get *their* ideas about the family, work, civil society, and the dignity of the person? The answer is: mainly from the social encyclicals *Rerum novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo anno* (1931). And where did the church get them? The short answer is that those encyclicals were part of the process through which the church had begun to reflect on the Enlightenment, the eighteenth-century revolutions, socialism, and the labor question in the light of Scripture, tradition, and her own experience as an "expert in humanity."

The most articulate advocate of this complex of ideas on the Human Rights Commission was a Lebanese Arab of the Greek Orthodox faith, Charles Malik. In reading the old UN transcripts, I was struck by Malik's frequent use of terms like the "intermediate associations" of civil society, and by his emphatic preference for the term "person" rather than "individual." When I had the opportunity to meet Charles Malik's son, Dr. Habib Malik, I asked him if he knew where his father had acquired that vocabulary. The answer was: from the heavily underlined copies of *Rerum novarum* and *Quadragesimo anno*, which Malik kept among the books he most frequently consulted.

Contrary to what is now widely supposed, the most zealous promoters of social and economic rights were not the Soviet bloc representatives but delegates from the Latin American countries. Except for the Mexican delegates, most of these people were inspired, not by Marx and Engels, but, like Malik, by Leo XIII and Pius XI. Their focus was not on the exploitation of man by man, but on the dignity of work and the preferential option for the poor.

Catholic social teaching, however, was just one of many sources of influence on that impressively multicultural document. Considering some of the ways in which the Catholic influence was reciprocated is harder to follow. It begins, I believe, in Paris in 1948 when the Human Rights Commissioners were trying to round up support from as many nations as possible for the final vote on the Declaration. A key figure in that lobbying process was the French member of the Commission, René Cassin. Cassin was a distinguished French lawyer who described himself as a secular Jew. He had lost twenty-nine relatives in concentration camps, and was later to win the Nobel Peace Prize for his human-rights activities. There is an intriguing sentence in Cassin's memoirs where he says that in the fall of 1948 he was aided on several occasions by the "discreet personal encouragements" of the papal nuncio in Paris. That nuncio was none other than Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII.

Roncalli's subsequent actions suggest that events in the UN that fall must have made a great impression on him. It also seems clear that he must have agreed with Maritain and other Catholic thinkers that there was value in discussing certain human goods as rights, even though the biblical tradition uses the language of obligation. In *Pacem in terris* (1963), John XXIII referred to the Universal Declaration by name and called it "an act of the highest importance."

Many Catholics were surprised, and some were even shocked, at the extent to which the documents of Vatican II, and John XXIII's encyclicals *Pacem in terris* and *Mater et magistra* (1961), seemed to reflect a shift from natural law to human rights. Some writers regard this shift as mainly rhetorical, an effort on the part of the church to make her teachings intelligible to "all men and women of good will."

But I believe it was more than that. I would say it was also part of the church's shift from nature to history, as well as her increasing openness to learning from other traditions. The church has always taught, with Saint Paul, that our knowledge of truth in this life is imperfect. But she has not always been so forceful as John Paul II was in *Centesimus annus* (1991) when he insisted that Christian believers are obliged to remain open to discover "every fragment of truth...in the life experience and in the culture of individuals and nations."

Needless to say, the church's adoption of rights language entailed the need to be very clear about the fact that she does not always use that terminology in the same way it is used in secular circles. Those who think the church should never have gone down that road at all often fail to notice two important facts about the church's use of rights language. First,

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the rights tradition into which the church has tapped is the biblically informed, continental, dignitarian tradition which she herself had already done so much to shape. "The Catholic doctrine of human rights," Avery Dulles points out, "is not based on Lockean empiricism or individualism. It has a more ancient and distinguished pedigree."

Second, the church did not even uncritically adopt the dignitarian vision. In Vatican II's *Gaudium et spes*, the council fathers say that the movement to respect human rights "must be imbued with the spirit of the gospel and be protected from all appearance of mistaken autonomy. We are tempted to consider our personal rights as fully protected only when we are free from every norm of divine law; but following this road leads to the destruction rather than to the maintenance of the dignity of the human person." In the same vein, John XXIII noted in *Pacem in terris* that everything the church says about human rights is conditioned by their foundation in the dignity that attaches to the person made in the image and likeness of God, and everything is oriented to the end of the common good.

In this context, some of the most striking interactions between Catholic social thought and human rights have occurred in the field of international advocacy. With more than 300,000 educational, health-care, and relief agencies serving mainly the world's poorest inhabitants, the church has become an outspoken advocate of social justice in international settings. But it is a hard sell. Challenging passages like this one from John Paul II's 1997 World Day of Peace message do not sit particularly well with affluent nations and first-world interest groups:

> Living out [the] demanding commitment [to solidarity] requires a total reversal of the alleged values which make people seek only their own good: power, pleasure, the unscrupulous accumulation of wealth...A society of genuine solidarity can be built only if the well-off, in helping the poor, do not stop at giving from what they do not need. Those living in poverty can wait no longer: They need help now and so have a *right* to receive immediately what they need [emphasis supplied].

At first glance, words like "a right to receive what one needs" sound uncomfortably like simplistic, secular social advocacy. But the church's use of rights language in this context cannot be equated with crude mandates for state-run social engineering programs. For one thing, the church has always refrained from proposing specific models: her gift to political science has been, rather, the principle of subsidiarity—which is steadily attracting interest as the United States debates the pros and cons of delivering many social services through faith-based institutions.

Moreover, the church teaches solidarity not as a policy, but as a virtue—a *virtue* that inclines us to overcome sources of division within ourselves and within society. Like any other virtue, solidarity requires constant practice; it is inseparable from personal reform.

The church's advocacy of the preferential option for the poor has led her to become a staunch defender of the Universal Declaration as an integrated whole. While most nations take a selective approach to human rights, the Holy See consistently lifts up the original vision of the Declaration—a vision in which political and civil rights are indispensable for social and economic justice, and vice versa.

As for the future, I believe the dialogue between Catholicism and the human-rights tradition will continue, and that it will be beneficial to both. One may even imagine that the resources of the Catholic tradition may be helpful in resolving several thorny dilemmas that have bedeviled the human-rights project from its outset, especially the dilemmas arising from challenges to its universality and its truth claims. The long Catholic experience in the dialectic between the core teachings of the faith and the various cultural settings in which the faith has been received helps us to see that to accept universal principles does not mean accepting that they must be brought to life in the same way everywhere. The experience of Catholicism with the inculturation of its basic teachings shows that universality need not entail homogeneity.

The framers of the UDHR had similar expectations for the relatively short list of rights that they deemed fundamental. Their writings reveal that they contemplated a legitimate pluralism in forms of freedom, a variety of means of protecting basic rights, and different ways of resolving the tensions among rights, provided that no rights were completely subordinated to others. As Jacques Maritain put it, there can be many different kinds of music played on the Declaration's thirty strings.

Another dilemma for the human-rights project is the challenge of historicism and relativism. If there are no common truths to which all men and women can appeal, then there are no human rights, and there is little hope that reason and choice can prevail over force and accident in the realm of human affairs. It is one thing to acknowledge that the human mind can glimpse truth only as through a glass darkly; and quite another to deny the existence of truth altogether. Hannah Arendt has warned, "The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction...and the distinction between true and false...no longer exist."

The Reason that the church defends is not the calculating reason of Hobbes—in the service of the passions—nor is it narrow scientific rationalism. It is the dynamic, recurrent, and potentially self-correcting process of experiencing, understanding, and judging that has animated her best theologians from Thomas Aquinas to Bernard Lonergan.

I trust that my enthusiasm for Catholic social thought and philosophy as seen in the light of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will not be understood as unbridled boosterism. I am well aware that much of what our tradition has to offer was learned painfully after mistakes and sad experience. But when it comes to the creation and continuing relevance of the Declaration, the church has reason to be proud of its contribution. □

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YES, JESUS IS REALLY THERE

Most Catholics still agree

James D. Davidson

At their meeting last June, the American Catholic bishops approved a document titled "The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist: Basic Questions and Answers" (*Origins*, June 28). The bishops' statement provides theological responses to fifteen questions "that commonly arise with regard to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist." The document was a response to the bishops' November 1999 meeting, during which concern was expressed that "a significant number of Catholics are confused about the Real Presence."

I am interested in the role that published surveys played in the development of the bishops' document, and I would like to review and critique two surveys in particular that prompted the bishops' "The Real Presence." Then, I will summarize seven more recent studies, which confirm earlier indications that there has been some decline in Catholics' belief in the Real Presence, but also indicate that Catholics, including young adults, are more likely to believe in the Real Presence than earlier studies suggested.

The first study to catch the bishops' attention was commissioned by the Reverend Peter Stravinskas, a well-known Catholic apologist and editor of *The Catholic Answer*. In 1992, he obtained funds from the Saint Augustine Center Association and hired the Gallup Organization to conduct a national poll asking Catholics: "Which one of the following statements about Holy Communion do you think best reflects your belief?" Only 30 percent of the respondents chose the first option: "When receiving Holy Communion, you are really and truly receiving the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine" (which Stravinskas interpreted as the "orthodox" Catholic view). Twenty-nine percent indicated "you are receiving bread and wine, which symbolize the spirit and teachings of Jesus and in so doing are expressing your attachment to His person and words." Twenty-four percent believed "you are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, which has become that because of your personal belief." Ten percent said "you are receiving bread and wine, in which Jesus is really and truly present." Finally, 8 percent said "none of the above," "don't know," or refused to answer.

Stravinskas also found that only 44 percent of Catholics who attended Mass weekly or more often accepted the orthodox Catholic view; and that even fewer monthly churchgoers (24 percent) and Catholics who attended once a year or less (22 percent) chose that view. He also reported that only half of Catholics age fifty and over agreed with the orthodox view, compared with even fewer thirty to forty-nine year-olds (21 percent) and eighteen to twenty-nine year-olds (22 percent). Stravinskas announced these findings in the March 15, 1992 issue of the *National Catholic Register*, and he theorized that the confusion about the Eucharist mostly stems from changes in the way the Mass is conducted (such as standing for Communion, taking Communion in the hand, elimination of the eucharistic fast, and allowing laypeople to distribute Communion).

Two years later, the *New York Times* (June 1, 1994) reported the results of a *New York Times*/CBS News poll on Catholics and their beliefs about the Real Presence (see also *Commonweal*, January 27, 1995). In this poll, Catholics were asked whether the bread and wine used in the Eucharist are "changed into the body and blood of Christ," or are "symbolic reminders of Christ." The reporter, Peter Steinfels, concluded

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that "almost two-thirds of American Catholics believe that during Mass, the central sacred ritual of Catholicism, the bread and wine can best be understood as 'symbolic reminders of Christ' rather than as actually being changed into Christ's body and blood." He also wrote: "Even among the subgroups of Catholics who said they attended Mass every week or almost every week, 51 percent described the rites as strictly symbolic." As further evidence of a "hollowing out" of belief in this vital area, Steinfels reported that young Catholics are more likely than older ones (70 percent vs. 45 percent) to hold the symbolic view.

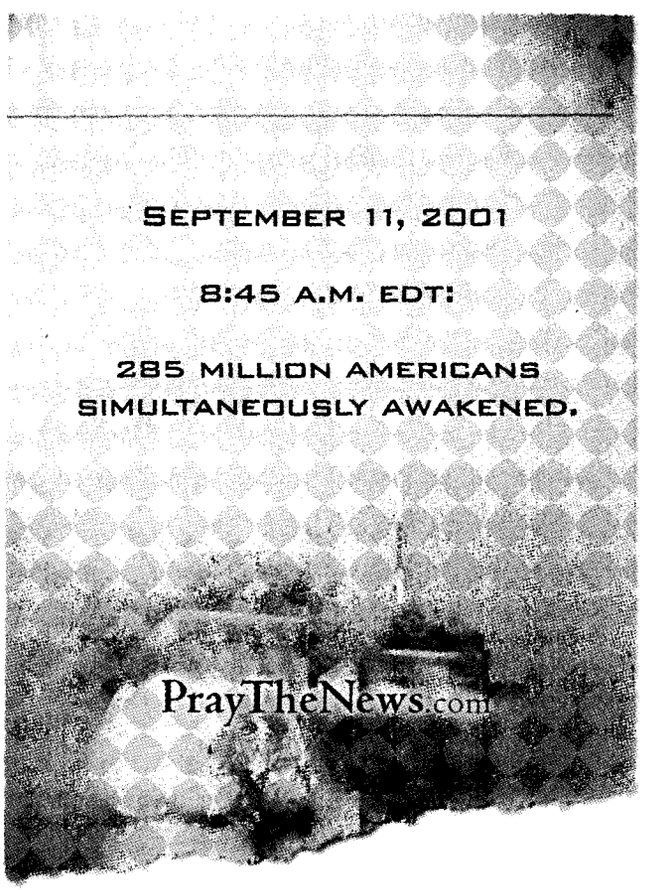
The results of the 1992 Gallup survey were brought to the attention of the bishops at their meeting in November 1992. While there was no immediate response from the body of bishops, individual bishops became concerned. Steinfels's conclusions, which have been widely accepted (see Charles Morris, *Catholic America*, 1997; Chester Gillis, *Roman Catholicism in America*, 1999), triggered further concern among church leaders.

Both the 1992 Gallup and 1994 *Times*/CBS studies, however, are problematic. In standard telephone interviews, researchers should provide succinct response categories that respondents can readily understand and easily distinguish in a brief period of time. In my view, the 1992 survey violated this norm. It offered respondents four lengthy choices which contained theological nuances that I suspect some respondents found difficult to discern over the phone. For example, I doubt that all the 10 percent of Catholics who chose the response "you are receiving bread and wine, in which Jesus is really and truly present" meant to reject the church's view of the Eucharist in favor of "the heretical teaching of Martin Luther called consubstantiation."

The 1994 *New York Times*/CBS News poll may also have been misleading. While it offered a choice between two views of Eucharist (one, that the bread and wine are actually changed into the body and blood of Christ; the other, that the bread and wine are symbolic reminders of Christ), the descriptions may have confused some respondents. Thus in a letter to the *Times* (June 18, 1994), theologian Peter Casarella expressed concerns about the survey's wording. In his view, some respondents might have shied away from the first response category, thinking it meant "the form of the material elements is transformed into the physical body of Christ" (which the church does not claim). Instead, they might have taken the second option, believing that "real symbolic presence and the memorial meal are standard features of traditional Catholic theology." In my view, the two options also might have put an undetermined number of respondents in the uncomfortable position of choosing between two categories, both of which they agreed with. They might have preferred a third option: that the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ both *really* and *symbolically* (which is consistent with Catholic theology).

Thus, we need to explore other approaches before we conclude how many Catholics believe in the Real Presence. Let me suggest three possibilities. First, without denying the symbolic nature of the sacrament, researchers could ask Catholics if they believe the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ in some real way. Second, researchers could ask if Catholics believe that the consecrated bread and wine are symbols in which the body and blood of Christ are really present. In both cases, agreement would signify belief in the Real Presence. Third, researchers could ask if people believe that the bread and wine are *strictly* symbolic reminders of Jesus. Agreement in this latter case would not square with a Catholic understanding of the Eucharist.

Seven recent studies employ these three options. And unlike the 1992 and 1994 surveys, these studies all indicate that a majority of Catholics, including young Catholics, continue to embrace this core church teaching on the Real Presence. In 1994, colleagues and I asked Catholic parishioners in Indiana to respond to this statement: "In Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ." Eighty-seven percent agreed. In 1997, when Dean Hoge, William Dinges, Mary Johnson, and Juan Gonzales used the same item in their study of twenty-to-thirty-nine-year-old Catholic confirmands, they found that 96 percent of Latinos and 87 percent of non-Latinos agreed (see Hoge et al., *Young Adult Catholics*, 2001). That same year, the Roper polling company found that 82 percent of American Catholics believe that "The bread and wine used in Mass are actually transformed into the body



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and blood of Jesus Christ." A national poll conducted this year by CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) concludes that 70 percent of Catholics twenty years of age and older believe that "Jesus Christ is really present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist," while 30 percent of those polled believe "The bread and wine are symbols of Jesus, but Jesus is not really present."

Recent studies also indicate that Catholics believe the Real Presence is among the core elements of their personal faith. In a 1995 national survey in which colleagues and I asked Catholics about the importance of the Real Presence, 63 percent said believing that "In Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ" is "very important" to them personally. Another 23 percent responded "fairly important" or "somewhat important." Only 12 percent said it is "not very important." In the same study, the percentage of registered parishioners believing in the importance of the Real Presence was higher still (see Davidson et al., *The Search for Common Ground*, 1997). In 1997, when Hoge, Dinges, Johnson, and Gonzales asked a national sample of twenty-to-thirty-nine-year-old Catholics what they consider "essential to the faith," 80 percent of young adults who attended Mass regularly, and 65 percent of all young Catholics, indicated "belief that God is present in the sacraments." Seventy-four percent of weekly Mass attenders, and 58 percent of all young adults, said "belief that Christ is really present in the Eucharist" is essential. In 1999, when colleagues and I asked American Catholics what it takes to be a good Catholic, 60 percent said one cannot be a good Catholic "without believing that in the Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus" (William D'Antonio et al., *American Catholics*, 2001). Our respondents attached more importance to the Real Presence than to church teachings about abortion (45 percent), helping the poor (43 percent), opposing divorce and remarriage (33 percent), opposing artificial birth control (26 percent), and going to Mass every Sunday (23 percent).

...there has been some real decline in the belief of Catholics in the Real Presence.

Like the 1992 and 1994 surveys, however, these more recent studies also indicate that belief in the Real Presence is declining. In our 1995 national survey, for example, we found that 79 percent of older Catholics but only 57 percent of middle-aged and younger Catholics believe that "In Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ" is "very important" to them personally. A similar weakening was found in our 1999 national survey, where 90 percent of the pre-Vatican II generation, 84 percent of the Vatican II generation, and 73 percent of the post-Vatican II generation said that belief in "sacraments, such as the Eucharist and marriage" is "very important." In the same survey, 62 percent of pre-Vatican II Catholics, 65 percent of Vatican II Catholics, and 55 percent of post-Vatican II Catholics said that one cannot be a good Catholic "without believing that in the Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus." Finally, according to CARA's 2001 poll, 80 percent of pre-Vatican II Catholics, 70 percent of Vatican II Catholics, and 62 percent of post-Vatican II Catholics believe that "Jesus Christ is really present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist," compared to 20 percent, 30 percent, and 38 percent respectively who now hold that "The bread and wine are symbols of Jesus, but Jesus is not really present."

What conclusions can we draw about what American Catholics really believe concerning the Real Presence? First, that we need to do more research. The most recent studies address some of the limitations of earlier studies, but they have limitations of their own (for example, they are based entirely on mailed questionnaires and telephone surveys). Future research should explore various theological perspectives and wordings, and should employ a variety of methodologies (interviews and focus groups, as well as mailed questionnaires and telephone surveys). It also should try to identify the factors in the church and in American society that make it possible for some Catholics to believe in the Real Presence, and those which hinder other Catholics from embracing this important teaching.

In the meantime, the bulk of recent research on the Real Presence supports two hypotheses. First, there has been some real decline in the belief of Catholics in the Real Presence. Bishops and other church leaders should do all they can to enhance a fuller appreciation and understanding of the Eucharist. The bishops' document "The Real Presence" is a step in that direction. Further steps might include changes in the way priests, religious, and lay leaders present the Real Presence to the laity. These might take place in the context of the Mass (for example, teaching Masses), but also in religious education programs for both young and adult Catholics. These efforts also might address alternative views of the Eucharist that Catholics are likely to encounter in a society that tends not to support a Catholic understanding of this sacrament.

Second, the situation is not as bleak as the 1992 Gallup survey and the 1994 *New York Times*/CBS News poll suggested. More recent research shows that a majority of Catholics, including young Catholics, still agree with the church's teaching that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ. A majority also believe that the Real Presence is closer to the core of the Catholic faith than many other church teachings. Although laypeople do not participate in the Eucharist as often as church leaders would like, and probably cannot express their belief in the Real Presence in language that would satisfy the theological virtuosos, still a strong majority of Catholics believe that Christ is really present in the Eucharist. □

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Rand Richards Cooper

HISTORY AS TRAGEDY

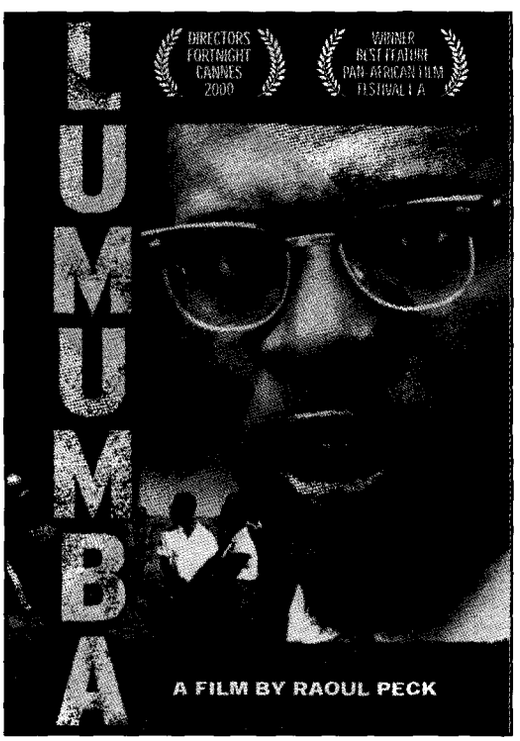
'Lumumba'

In the early 1980s I spent two years in Africa, including several months in the calamity formerly known as Zaire. Mobutu's Congo was a wreck, its roads in disrepair, its phones and electricity spotty, its hospitals lacking medicines. Unpaid soldiers freelanced as thugs; if you had an enemy, you could get him beaten up, or his car burned, for $50. There was a zoo in Kinshasa, but most of its cages were empty. People had eaten the animals. Mobutu, meanwhile, busied himself amassing personal plunder. Ridiculous in leopard-skin cap, silk ascot, and dark sunglasses, he stared down from every shop and office wall, a model for the Big Man of V. S. Naipaul's bleak postcolonial Congo novel, *A Bend in the River*.

One point of solace for Mobutu's embittered subjects was the memory of Patrice Lumumba, Congo's young and idealistic first prime minister, who, after a postindependence coup, and with CIA involvement, was delivered over to his political enemies and murdered in 1961. These agonized events form the subject of Raoul Peck's excellent film, *Lumumba*. Part bio-pic, part historical narrative, part political thriller, *Lumumba* fashions the complexities of Congolese independence-era politics into a moving tragedy. While sympathetic to Lumumba—Peck's warm-up for the current work was a 1991 documentary, *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet*—the film refuses to turn him into the Che Geuvara-like figure he has become for some. We get not the myth but the man, flaws included.

The story begins in 1959, a year, Lumumba writes in his notes, of "fury, enthusiasm, and violence." Congo's transition to nationhood was sabotaged by the extreme racial *hauteur* of Belgian colonialism. At independence the vast country had just seventeen African university graduates—and not a single lawyer, architect, engineer, or army officer among them. Belgian leaders schemed to ensure that the country's vast exploitable resources—copper, diamonds, minerals—remained in European hands. In Léopoldville (later Kinshasa), we see the Belgian commander spelling it out for his African troops with chalk on a blackboard, "*Independance: Après=/Avant.*" Before equals after. Neocolonialism, in a single simple equation.

Peck and co-writer Pascal Bonitzer sketch Lumumba's career, a young postal clerk and beer salesman who rose from trade unionism to found a party, the MNC, pledged to Congolese unity. After much infighting, he emerged as prime minister in a coalition government, with the phlegmatic Joseph Kasavubu as president. The fiery Lumumba had little patience for flattering his country's colonial masters, and at independence ceremonies on June 30, 1960, when King Baudoin makes a speech paying tribute to the glorious paternalism of Léopold II, we see him counter with an eloquent and furious indictment of the Belgians. "We have known mockery and insults, blows from morning to night," he charges, denouncing colonialism as "the shame of the twentieth century."



His words inflamed, and helped fuel the violent unrest of the days to come, an ugly venting of accumulated African rage. Belgian settlers were beaten and raped, houses and stores looted; and when the Force Publique—still commanded by Belgian officers—tried to crack down, garrison after garrison mutinied. Events spun quickly out of Lumumba's control, with Belgian paratroopers landing to protect fleeing Belgian nationals. To make things worse, within days, the pro-Belgian leader of copper-rich Katanga Province, Moise Tshombe, declared Katangan independence, and called in Belgian troops to guarantee it. The week-old country tumbled into chaos and civil war. Faced with losing Katanga and 70 percent of the nation's mineral resources, Lumumba and Kasavubu reluctantly asked the UN to intervene. Soon, the Congo became an international flashpoint—a testing ground for the UN and, with the Americans and Soviets lining up behind opposing factions, a potential cold-war theater. Lumumba called on Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld to subdue Katanga by force. But the UN took a far more limited posture: maintain order, and—above all—keep the Congo from being sucked into the cold war.

Lumumba's situation went from uncomfortable to impossible. On one side were his own rioting troops; on another, the Katanga secession, backed by the Belgians and European mining companies; on still another, the rapidly developing ambitions of his own once-trusted chief of staff, Colonel Joseph-Desiré

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Mobutu, now being courted by the Americans. Though in power, Lumumba had no power. When—as a last resort, Peck insists—he turned to the Soviets for military trucks and transport planes, he played right into the hands of American cold warriors. Eventually the Belgians persuaded Kasavubu to fire him, whereupon Lumumba turned around and fired Kasavubu. At the urging of America—"we need a man to take things in hand," says the U.S. ambassador—Mobutu stepped in.

After weeks of house arrest, Lumumba tried to escape to Stanleyville, his own power base in the east. Mobutu's forces caught up with him and brought him back to Léopoldville, where he was paraded, beaten and bloodied, before journalists and UN diplomats. The UN had abandoned him to his fate. Through the connivance of Kasavubu, Mobutu, and the Belgians, and with U.S. approval, Lumumba was flown on 17 January 1961 to Katanga and handed over to his enemies. With Moise Tshombe and other Katangan and Belgian officials present, he and two associates were brutally beaten and then executed by a firing squad, their bodies subsequently dismembered and burned. Patrice Lumumba was thirty-six years old; all in all, he had held office for a little over eleven weeks.

Lumumba was a difficult man—high-strung and unpredictable, at times nearly hysterical, writes Brian Urquhart, former UN representative to the Congo, in a recent *New York Review of Books*. Where Mobutu cultivated the tough aspect of a soldier, and later the self-mystification of an African emperor, Lumumba resembled a Sunday school teacher: a tall, scrawny figure in white shirt, narrow tie, and heavy black-framed glasses. (The handsome Franco-Cameroonian actor Eriq Ebouaney plays him brilliantly, but his strapping physique undercuts the actual Lumumba's impression of vulnerability.) His reputation was made largely as an orator, through fiery speeches that, as one Belgian noted, gave the impression of a man who could not be dominated. Peck's film presents both the attractions and the limitations of the orator-as-leader, making clear what a hopeless task it was to try to rule a vast, contested, corruption-riddled nation on the strength of a voice alone. In a way, *Lumumba* is a study in the opposite of demagoguery. Peck identifies passionate oratory with idealism, even naiveté. In one scene, flying over Katanga in the presidential plane, Kasavubu looks down at the countryside, brooding darkly on the situation on the ground—while beside him, Lumumba works excitedly on another speech. His words are passionate but ineffectual, his gifts as orator bringing him to a place where his temperament is ill-suited to lead. The Big Man, on the other hand, says very little at all.

The movie gathers power as the man himself loses it. We watch Lumumba's frustration turn gradually to rage, tinged with paranoia (and there was much to be paranoid about—including CIA plots to kill him with poison toothpaste) and a dawning sense of futility. The truth is, few places could have been less hospitable to an idealistic, inexperienced, and divisive young leader than the Congo—a country rich in natural resources and bereft of political ones; a cauldron of tribalism, with foreign interests keeping the flame up high. Lumumba's portrayal in the film as a martyr may carry a touch of sentimentality, but it seems politically accurate. Indeed, his murder hastened the immediate cause he had fought for—a new UN mandate, adopted in the emotional aftermath of his killing, authorizing the use of force in Katanga to end the secession.

Lumumba begins and ends with an ominous procession of headlights through the bush at night, a killing cortege bearing Lumumba toward his death, as his voice reads from a last letter to his wife. "It is not I who matter, it is the Congo, it is our poor people whose independence has been turned into a cage," he says. "History will have its say one day." With bitter irony, Peck interweaves scenes of Lumumba's Christ-like passion with the advent of Mobutu's imperial court—where the dictator, seen for the first time in his new garb, sits on his throne at a huge banquet, serenaded by native dancers and guarded by machine-gun toting red berets, and offers a moment of silence for "our national hero."

It is the cold hypocrisy of a villain. But while Peck's film faithfully records the complicity of those involved in Lumumba's undoing, it also aims at a reality beneath any individual scheming. Forty years later, Lumumba's fall has the look of inevitability; Peck's fine film provides a suggestive glimpse of a moment when history itself set the stage, and the lead figure wandered into the role: a born star, a natural for tragedy. □

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Not a wasted word

The Stories of J.F. Powers
J.F. Powers
New York Review of Books Classics, $14.95, 570 pp.

Morte D'Urban
J.F. Powers
New York Review of Books Classics, $12.95, 336 pp

Wheat that Springeth Green
J.F. Powers
New York Review of Books Classics, $12.95, 327 pp.

John Garvey

We all owe the people at New York Review of Books Classics a great debt of thanks. They have brought all of J.F. Powers back into print. Powers (1917–99) wrote mainly (but not exclusively) about the Catholic clergy, and my uncle, a Catholic priest, was convinced that Powers must have had clerical spies who filled him in on what life was really like in rectories.

My uncle had reason to wonder about this. He was the pastor of the only Catholic church in Jacksonville, Illinois, Powers's hometown. His parish, Our Saviour's, was Powers's own when Powers was a boy, and my uncle's predecessor, Dean Francis Formaz, may well be the model for Monsignor Morez in *Morte D'Urban*. When Formaz died he left a will that deeded the church a sum of money for the construction of a new church building, but the money was available on one condition, one straight out of Powers: The church built with his money must be called "The Dean Formaz Church of Our Saviour."

My uncle could not abide the thought that a church built on his watch would give Formaz a higher billing than Jesus, and lawyers informed him that the will was iron-clad. So my uncle's solution—one Powers would like, I think—was to place the name of the church on the cornerstone of the new building, and he planted a small, dense forest of shrubs directly in front of it.

"Harvey Roche (later Father Urban) was born in that part of Illinois which more and more identifies itself with Abraham Lincoln but has its taproot in the South, Protestants were very sure of themselves there." So begins a chapter in *Morte D'Urban*, one of two novels Powers wrote, and he has my part of downstate Illinois dead right. That Protestant assurance was much stronger in the days of Powers's youth than it is now. Close to the time of his birth a pamphlet called "Hell at Midnight in Springfield" managed to combine anti-Catholicism, racism, and prohibitionism, warning citizens of the state capitol (thirty miles from Powers's home) against the evils of Romanism, liquor, and black men.

I mention this because a sense of the Catholic difference pervades Powers's writing, while at the same time his priests negotiate the same car dealerships, liquor stores, and furniture shops as their Midwestern Protestant neighbors. Powers wrote most of his best stories before Vatican II changed the face of the church, a change he was not particularly happy with, perhaps because that sense of Catholic difference was diluted. His stories, nevertheless, hold up; they work as well today as when they were first published.

Flannery O'Connor was a fan, though she qualified her praise: "Powers's stories can be divided into two kinds—those that deal with the Catholic clergy and those that don't," she wrote to Cecil Dawkins. "Those that deal with the clergy are as good as any stories being written by anybody; those that don't are not so good."

That's generally true, though there are exceptions (for example, the story "Look How the Fish Live," about a father, his children, and their compassion for a dying bird, among other things). His two novels, *Morte D'Urban* and *Wheat that Springeth Green*, are about priests. They are good, *Morte D'Urban* especially so, but Powers is at the top of his form in the stories.

Early in his career Powers won an

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Art Song

He hears it when stopped in traffic
at the intersection where expressionless
commuters drift by behind winds of glass.

It's not the kind of music he could dance to,
nor would he dance if it were not for women
who think his soul generous.

No, he hears the music of insistence.
Its refrain—ME ME ME—is also the coda.
In between are stanzas of desire—ME you ME you—

until the light changes and he shifts himself
into drive, confused by the determination
of traffic revving its engines and the wipers singing

their little hearts out, brush strokes
on a snare drum, which is what he imagines
is the music of his own heart: a thin layer

of skin stretched over a hollowed root,
rattled by the swish and whisk of light fingers—
the scratch and fizz of air gasping through dry chambers.

Peter E. Murphy

O. Henry award for "The Valiant Woman," one of his best. Father Firman is saddled with Mrs. Stoner, the widow of a miner who is his nightmare of a housekeeper. Powers's description of their life together makes most bad marriages seem enviable: "She hid his books, kept him from smoking, picked his friends (usually the pastors of her colleagues), bawled out people for calling after dark, had no humor except at cards, and then it was grim, very grim, and she sat hatchet-faced every morning at Mass. But she went to Mass, which was all that kept the church from being empty some mornings. She did annoying things all day long. She said annoying things into the night. She said she had given him the best years of her life. Had she? Perhaps—for the miner had her only a year."

He doesn't waste a word here, or anywhere. In "Prince of Darkness," Powers gives us Father Burner, a worldly priest, totally without a spiritual life, who resents the fact that his seminary classmates have all been made pastors, while he is moved as an assistant from parish to parish. At the story's start he is being courted by an insurance salesman: "'The Plan, Father,' Mr. Tracy lifted his seersucker trousers by the creases, crossed his two-toned shoes, and rolled warmly forward. 'Father...'

"Father Burner met his look briefly. He was wary of the fatherers. A backslider he could handle, it was the old story, but a red-hot believer, especially a talkative one, could be a devilish nuisance. This kind might be driven away only by prayer and fasting, and he was not adept at either."

Powers takes us through a day with this remarkably unsympathetic and self-absorbed man, to his meeting with the archbishop in the evening that will, he hopes, lead to his being named a pastor at last. It is a funny and chilling story, one of Powers's best.

It has been said that there is little about the spiritual life in Powers's stories, but that is true only if you are looking for something fairly heavy and obvious—a description of the experience of prayer, or something mystical. The conflict between what the church claims and the mundane settings in which it must make its claims can be found throughout. In one of his earliest and most moving stories, "Lions, Hearts, and Leaping Does," Powers offers us the understanding of a dying Franciscan friar, and it is this vision that pervades all of Powers: "He wanted nothing for himself at last. This may have been the first time he found his will amenable to the Divine. He had never been less himself and more the saint. Yet now, so close to sublimity, or perhaps only tempted to believe so (the Devil is most wily at the deathbed), he was beset by the grossest distractions. They were to be expected, he knew, as indelible in the order of things: the bingo game going on under the Cross for the seamless garment of the Son of Man: everywhere the sign of contradiction, and always. When would he cease to be surprised by it? Incidents repeated themselves, twined, parted, faded away, came back clear, and would not be prayed out of mind. He watched himself mounting the pulpit of a metropolitan church, heralded by the pastor as the renowned Franciscan friar sent by God in His goodness to preach this novena—like to say a little prayer to test the microphone, Father?—and later reading through the petitions to Our Blessed Mother, cynically tabulating the pleas for a Catholic boyfriend, drunkenness banished, the sale of real estate and coming furiously upon one: 'that I'm not pregnant.' And at the same church on Good Friday carrying the crucifix along the Communion rail for people to kiss, giving them the indulgence, and afterwards in the sacristy wiping the lipstick of the faithful from the image of Christ crucified."

Powers, more than any other writer I can think of, shows us at the same time both the depth of sadness and the comedy revealed by a belief in the Incarnation. □

John Garvey *is an Orthodox priest and a longtime columnist for* Commonweal.

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SWEET SOMETHINGS

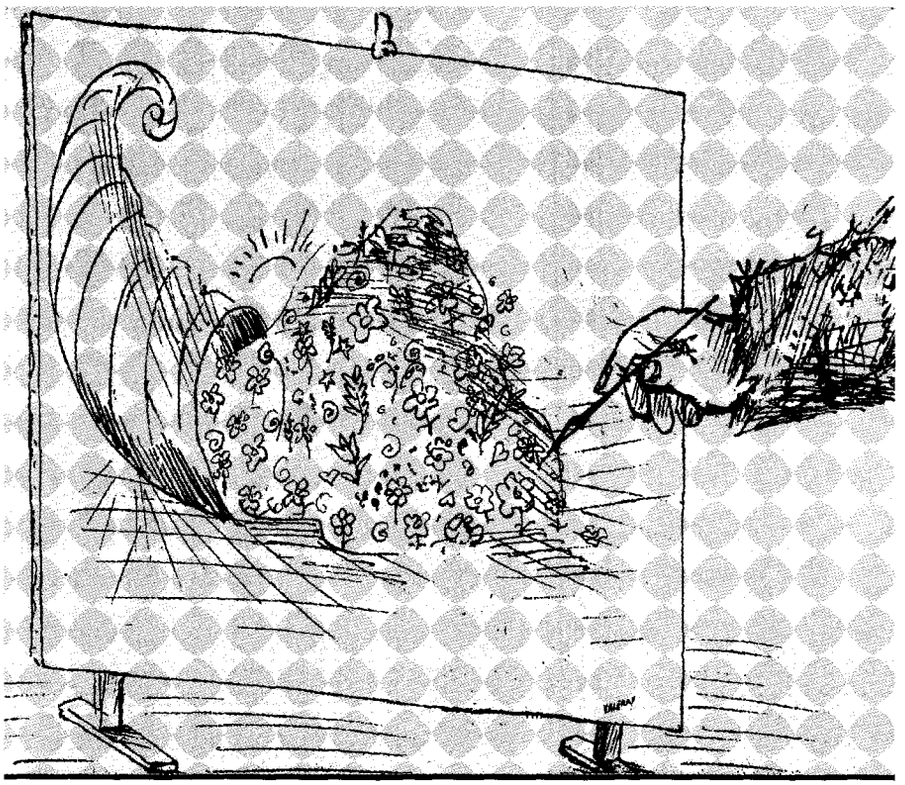
Talk of Love
How Culture Matters
Ann Swidler
The University of Chicago Press, $30, 300 pp.

Maura A. Ryan

Most "of my interviewees talk quite naturally in individualistic terms, about choice, about wanting to do things for one's partner, and about love that has to be spontaneous to be real. But in relationships they also find themselves interdependent in ways they have difficulty formulating in these terms."

This fascinating study by *Habits of the Heart* co-author Ann Swidler uses the way "ordinary" Americans think about courtship, love, and marriage to explore the influence of culture on behavior. The complex and often contradictory expectations people bring to the experience of love reflect the equally complex and contradictory ways they use culture to understand their lives. Against reigning interpretations of culture as "discourse," "schema," or "collection of practices," Swidler argues convincingly that culture functions as a "tool kit," containing "repertoires of meanings" from which people draw, in a variety of ways, in making and justifying choices. This allows her to explain, not only how culture influences decisions individuals make to enter into and remain within certain kinds of relationships, but also how individuals sort through conflicting cultural messages in periods of personal or social transition.

Swidler is more interested in culture than in love per se, and much of the book is devoted to a technical argument about the relationship between culture and action. However, because she allows those interviewed to speak for themselves throughout, the challenge of interpret-



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Charles Dickinson

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If Christianity—without losing its soul—is yet to avoid losing touch with the world, it must constantly update itself by dialogue with all the intellectual currents of today. To this end, the author proposes a necessary two-way ***dialectic*** between theology and the world: an ongoing dialectic ultimately essential to both church and world.

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For further information, contact the Rev. Stephen Happel, dean, School of Religious Studies, 202-319-5683 or cua-deansrs@cua.edu.

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ing both the experience of love and the impact of culture is accessible even to the nonspecialist. At the same time, while she is not concerned ultimately with questions like the fate of contemporary marriage or the possibilities for genuine intimacy and enduring commitment in a "consumer age," she says much along the way that is useful to those of us who are and those of us, in particular, who care about the role of religion in shaping the culture(s) of love.

Talk of Love's most interesting conclusions concern the place of culture in social change. Culture drives social change but not through the transmission of controlling or enduring values as is usually assumed. Rather, culture shapes society, especially in periods of transition or instability, by supplying a "repertoire of capacities for action that can be mobilized for new objectives." Cultural experience forms the desiring or choosing self and provides the resources available for solving problems. Cultural values or ideologies endure because they generate or shore up useful strategies for action in the face of existing problems. To understand why certain cultural concepts retain force or influence, in this case, ideals of "love," we have to look at what problems they help to solve. Hollywood's "mythic love" narrative and its younger stepsister, "prosaic-realistic love," persist because they make it possible for persons schooled in American individualism, operating under the assumption that obligations must be freely chosen, to undertake and maintain binding, exclusive, and future-oriented life commitments. As Swidler puts it, the popular culture of love flourishes because "it both prepares people for and helps them to organize and carry through the aspects of marriage that depend on individual action."

If Swidler is correct about the role of culture, it suggests revisiting the question of what place ought to be accorded so-called "traditional" marriage. If, especially under conditions of cultural flux or upheaval, institutions play a more crucial role in influencing action than rules or values, it may be important to look at how to support the central practices we associate with traditional marriage even as we question its traditional forms in light of current social conditions and heightened sensitivity to issues of gender. Her study also underscores the importance of attending to what Margaret Farley in her book *Personal Commitments* called "the Way of Fidelity." Ideals of love shape persons capable of executing a contradiction in terms: a relationship "simultaneously perfectly free and perfectly binding." For marriage to last, however, the feelings, intentions, and virtues that make such an endeavor possible in the first place must be embodied in the day-to-day practices of life, in the mundane "deeds of love" as clearly as in the first declarations of love. Communities of discourse such as faith communities could play a more important role than they now seem to play in shaping capacities for this kind of "daily fidelity."

The contribution of this study to understanding how Americans mobilize cultural resources to make choices about intimacy, love, and marriage is somewhat limited by the self-conscious focus on a small slice of America. Swidler acknowledges that her interviewees were all white, middle- and upper-middle-class suburbanites from the San Jose area. Although she is therefore modest in her conclusions, one can't but wonder what more would be learned about both love and the uses of culture by extending the conversation. Moreover, little distinction is made between religious commitment and evangelical or fundamentalist expressions. Thus, while the study raises interesting questions for religion, for example, how "cast-off faith" might function as part of a cultural repertoire, we need a richer picture of religion to understand how most Christians draw on it.

Swidler does a wonderful job of showing why the important question is not "what is culture," but "how is culture used." If we agree with her interpretation, we are left with not only a more fluid, diverse, sometimes discordant picture of the relationship between culture and behavior, but a more complex account of what it might mean to be "countercultural." At very least, a truly countercultural faith must involve more than simply offering critique of prevailing values or norms. Rather, if culture acts most powerfully by equipping us to act within the world as we find it, we are back at an old question for the church: How do we enable people to envision and act within the world we only hope to bring about? □

Maura A. Ryan *teaches in the theology department at the University of Notre Dame.*

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MADE OF CLAY

The Procedure
Harry Mulisch
Translated by Paul Vincent
Viking, $24.95, 230 pp.

Charles Murtaugh

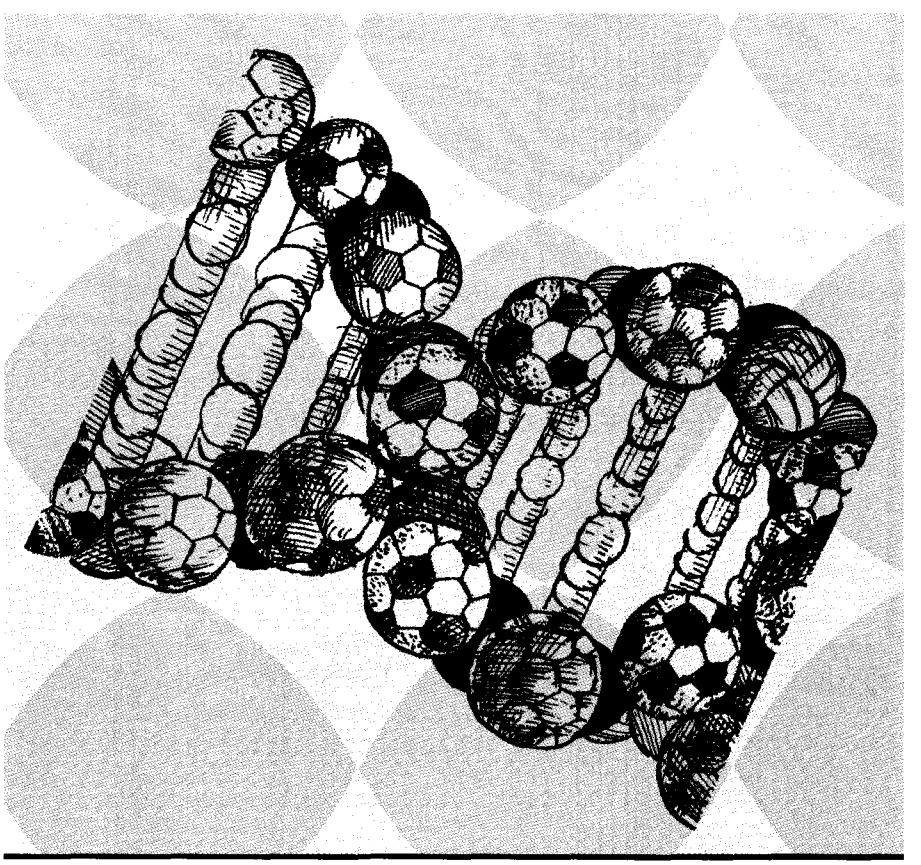
A current exhibit at New York's Museum of Natural History depicts the 3 billion letters of the human genome as filling 140 Manhattan telephone books. In *The Procedure*, Dutch novelist Harry Mulisch more provocatively describes the genome as "five hundred bibles...by which you are completely determined." In a previous novel, *The Discovery of Heaven*, Mulisch compared the universe as divine creation to the written word as human; here, he extends the analogy to the genetic code, a script written within our very cells. As his author-narrator tells us at the outset, "[God's] creation, too—the world, man—is linguistic in nature, ultimately a question of spelling, just like the world and the people that I in turn wish to conjure up." While textbook writers conceptualize genes as words, Mulisch's protagonist, the brooding molecular biologist Victor Werker, prefers to imagine the genetic code as Word. Victor has actually written a new code, and infused life into a clay crystal—thus pulling off an *imitatio dei* even more audacious than that of the novelist.

Mulisch's ideas are provocative, his narrative frequently brilliant, and his timing—amid news reports on cloning and genetically modified organisms—impeccable. All the more frustrating, then, that his novel fails to live up to the promise of its dazzling opening chapters, in which the narrator lays out the themes of the story to come. Among these is collaboration: unlike God, who could breathe life into the earth without assistance, human creations require "that there should be two...[which] suits us well because there are two of us too, you and I"—that is, writer and reader. The novel disappoints because its ideas overwhelm its narrative action; where idea and action try to collaborate, the result is often lifeless.

This is exemplified in thirty-four pages that Mulisch uses to retell the legend of the Prague golem, created in the sixteenth century by Rabbi Jehudah Löw. The parallels between Löw and his rabbinical son-in-law bringing a clay man to life, and the later story of Victor and his colleague Brock animating their own clay, are potent yet obvious, so obvious that Mulisch could have dramatically condensed what amounts to novelistic stock footage (the Jewish ghetto is rendered in smoky alleyways, rag shops, and onions—lots of onions) and elaborate, static set pieces. For instance, when Löw is summoned to an audience with the Emperor, he (and the reader) first must sit through a banquet table debate about the relationship between sign and signified, conducted by an intellectual Who's Who of the Holy Roman Empire. Amid Mulisch's name-dropping, one hears a lingering echo of "lights, camera, action."

The Prague section follows a fascinating introduction by the novel's narrator, and is succeeded by a lively account of Victor's parents, a military officer and a sculptor (her profession is one of the novel's subtler bits of symbolism). One encounters this chapter as if emerging from a stuffy subway station. Mulisch shows off a gift for invigoratingly specific details when, for instance, Victor's parents shake hands over the name of their unborn child: "Because for a couple of weeks she'd been too tired to work in her studio, for the first time since he'd known her, her hands were completely clean."

Most of the slim novel is taken up with a series of letters sent by Victor to his estranged lover Clara, addressed to



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their stillborn daughter Aurora. His hubristic success in artificial creation stands in stark contrast to his failure at the more usual method. These letters alternate between sparklingly erudite ideas and utterly unlikely events, staged for our benefit. Victor's entire career is a case in point: having created the eobiont, a living clay, he has improbably set this work aside to study the DNA of Egyptian ape mummies. One suspects that he is brought to Egypt less for his research than to allow Mulisch to weave Egyptian mythology into his tapestry of cultural references ("[Apes] were sacred here, because they were dedicated to the writer-god Thoth, who awakened Osiris from death"). These references impress, but the novel creaks under the weight of its allusions.

A further note on Victor's improbable career: when he is not creating life in the lab, or necromancing with mummy DNA, he apparently vivisects chimpanzees. No reason for this odd side-project is given, but it certainly supports Mulisch's indictment of the scientific endeavor. Notwithstanding his suspicions of the modern-day black arts (or perhaps driven by them), Mulisch must have enjoyed his research, because he deploys the arcana of molecular biology with the same aplomb he exhibits in classical mythology and the Kabbalah.

Victor's letters come most fully to life when Mulisch releases his narrative from its thematic strictures. Consider the beautiful, terrifying description of his and Clara's stillborn child: "I went over to her [Clara], knelt down next to the bed, and put a hand on your narrow chest. You were warm! You were dead and yet warm! But it wasn't your warmth, it was Mummy's. From now on you would cool down minute by minute, until you had reached the room temperature of your death." The father's emotions transcended by the scientist's need to observe and hypothesize: this passage is perfect, apart from the unforgivable pun on "mummy."

After the stillbirth, Victor takes Clara to Arles to recover. She abandons him there, and he wanders distraught through the streets, ending up at the Alycamps, a Roman-era necropolis. Pause a moment here: Trying to relieve his stricken lover, whom he had earlier likened to "a living sarcophagus," Victor brings her to a town in which a principal tourist attraction is—an avenue of tombs! The resonance—ancient Egypt, the womb as a grave, and the Alycamps—is as remarkable as it is forced.

One wishes that Mulisch had simply given himself more space to develop his novel, more room for supporting players and scenes with which to gently knead in the ideas that he too often breaks over the reader's head. These ideas are so impressive, and so numerous, that one hopes Mulisch will resurrect them in a future work, perhaps using the example of an Egyptian god: after Osiris was chopped up and scattered, Isis gathered up the pieces and remade him whole. A similar procedure may be in order here. □

Charles Murtaugh *is a research fellow in the molecular and cellular biology department at Harvard University.*

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GETTING BEYOND CHOICE

Cultural Dilemmas of Progressive Politics
Styles of Engagement among Grass-roots Activists
Stephen Hart
University of Chicago Press, $17, 292 pp.

Eugene McCarraher

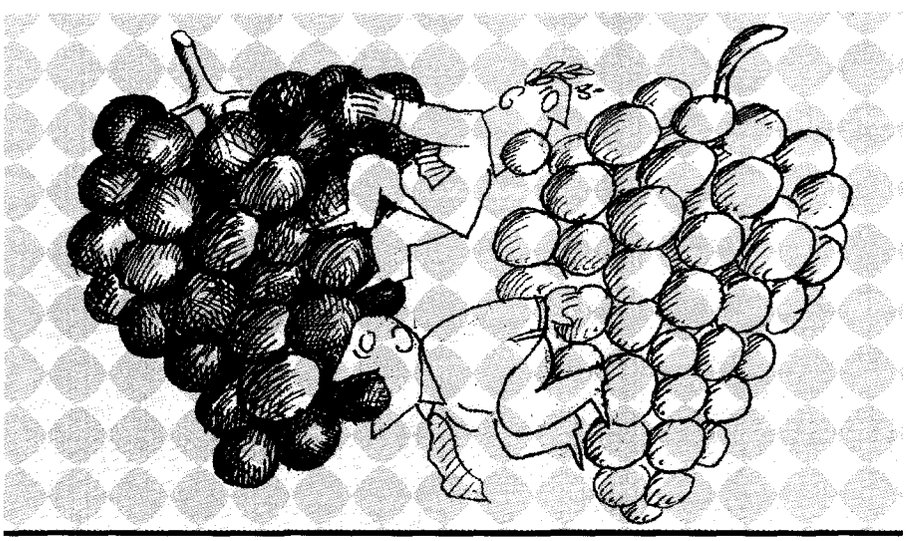
I supported Ralph Nader and the Green Party last fall, and in the process attended a few fundraisers, rallied with other partisans at a Nader speech, and walked door-to-door peddling brochures, pamphlets, and an exhortation to anyone who engaged me in conversation.

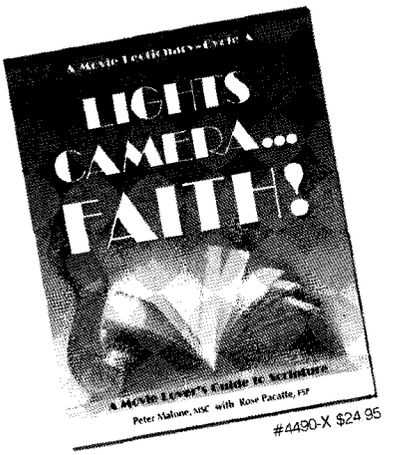
The Bush people were polite and occasionally bemused. (Thanks, useful idiot, I could hear them thinking.) Most of the Gore people (working-class Democrats whose support for Al was tepid and tactical) bemoaned the lack of a genuine alternative. They admired Nader and supported many Green positions—especially a living wage and national health insurance—but were candid enough to admit that they were voting for Gore out of fear.

Other Gore supporters, usually upscale "liberals" and "progressives," considered me and my ilk a loopy pestilence. How dare you "give the country to Bush," went the refrain. Besides, stocks are up, jobs are plentiful, "choice" is still safe—so what are you tree-hugging spoilers so sore about?

The reactions of "liberals" taught me a lot about what Stephen Hart calls "the cultural dilemmas of progressive politics." While Gore's liberal faithful weren't "activists," for the most part, their combination of moral fervor and technocratic haughtiness pointed to some of the broader and deeper problems that bedevil American progressives.

Hart, a sociologist at SUNY-Buffalo and an experienced activist, has explored the terrain of progressive politics before. In *What Does the Lord Require?* (1992), he examined how American Christians variously translate the gospel into positions on economic issues, from "democratic capitalism" to "democratic Socialism." In his new book, Hart addresses the larger issue of culture and politics. Relying extensively on histories and interviews with members of two organizations—the Milwaukee Innercity Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) and Amnesty International (AI)—he attempts to identify the "cultural work" that promotes or inhibits progressive politics.





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Hart believes progressives have become lazy or inept at the work of linking their struggles for social justice and civil liberties to the most powerful currents in American culture: religion (or "faith" as Hart also calls it) and liberal individualism. That "cultural work" involves balancing the competing claims of "expansive" modes of public discourse that cast particular struggles in the broadest moral and religious terms, and "constrained" styles that emphasize information and neutrality.

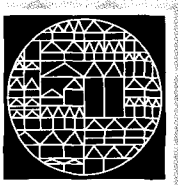
Progressives, Hart contends, have adopted a wonkish public style—a "constrained" one that puts "process over substance"—and eschewed more popular, forceful, expansive approaches of ritual and narrative. "Faith-based" or "congregation-based" organizers such as MICAH perform their cultural work more effectively and thus exemplify "a livelier set of cultural practices than most American social-justice movements." AI, on the other hand, provides a cautionary tale about the limits of secular activism.

Consisting of congregations rather than individuals, MICAH's membership organizes poor and working-class inhabitants of Milwaukee to fight for better housing, schools, and other social services. While most of its leaders appear to be Catholics, MICAH's practice is a model of ecumenism. Its ideology and agenda stem from an array of sources: Saul Alinsky's "back-of-the-yards" mobilizing; the "pedagogy of the oppressed" contained in liberation theology; and a more reformist Catholic social tradition currently embodied in the National Council of Catholic Bishops.

In addition to addressing bread-and-butter concerns, MICAH seeks to shape a public discussion that merges populism and religion. When organizing neighborhoods, activists—cultivated through "a kind of apostolic succession"—encourage residents to "define their concerns and needs, and the injustices they experience, *themselves*." MICAH's actions and its own gatherings become quasi-religious rituals that feature confrontations with the powers and principalities as well as personal testimonies that confirm the mission and devotion of the people.

MICAH also reinterprets the language of individualism by defining "self-interest" as the pursuit of health care, education, and other requirements of human flourishing. Overall, MICAH's conscious attention to the cultural form of public discussion—to "political action as dramaturgy"—explains its considerable clout in city politics.

Unlike MICAH, AI focuses on individual rights rather than social justice and proscribes discursive reliance on religion, appealing instead to the secularized human-rights tradition of the Enlightenment. Interestingly, the organization employs a similar dramaturgy and symbolic practice: vigils, letter and petition writing, a memorable logo (a candle wrapped in barbed wire). But because AI forgoes any philosophical justification of its causes and relies almost wholly on information, it has a hard time attracting and retaining recruits. "Newcomers seldom returned," Hart notes



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curtly, because their commitments were understood to be "random and private." Moreover, AI cannot speak religious languages that might have a broader and more powerful resonance. The conviction of AI activists about the transparent "obviousness" of their causes demonstrates to Hart their crippling (not to mention arrogant) inattention to the cultural work of educating public opinion.

Buoyed by his work on MICAH, Hart seems optimistic about the prospects for a culturally vigorous progressivism. Like Alan Wolfe (editor of the Morality and Society Series, which includes this book) and unlike Robert Bellah and Robert Putnam, Hart believes that American civil society is not a dry-boned desert of lonely bowlers and expressive individualists. In fact, Hart sees a "reasonably healthy" ensemble of institutions with whose fabric and language progressives can perform their cultural work.

I'm not so sure about this, or about much else in a book so leavened with righteous passion yet so lamed by flaws of exposition, analysis, and vision. Though relatively jargon-free, Hart's opaque prose is squarely in the studies-have-shown school of sociological writing. That's a shame, since American activism has been graced, from Richard Allen and Jane Addams to Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr., by writing that records the fusion of personal transformation and social change.

At the same time, Hart's and MICAH's explication of "self-interest"—which could have offered a refreshing counter to critics of individualism like Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas—seems tortuously convoluted to me. Worse, though, the problem with MICAH's "self-interest" is the same problem endemic to the Alinsky approach: the lack of a *systemic* analysis and politics that looks beyond the locality. Moreover, does the pedagogy of the oppressed always ensure a more knowledgeable and effective politics? Hart, like many on the liberal left, seems entranced by bromides about "the grass roots" that obscure the need for historical and political knowledge that isn't acquired through one's own limited experience.

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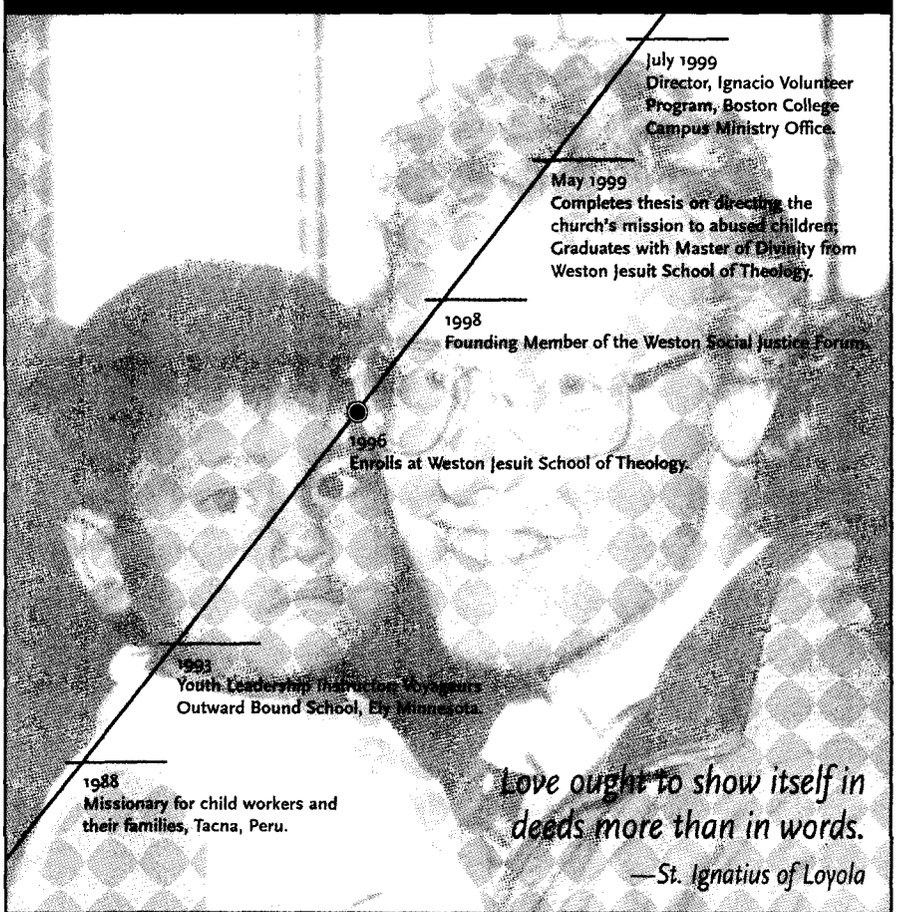
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1988
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—St. Ignatius of Loyola

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And what is "liberal" or "progressive," anyway? Hart concedes the difficulty of defining these terms but plows ahead anyway, rather than doing the more difficult but potentially more rewarding work of exploring new political categories. Why is it "unprogressive" or "reactionary," as Hart seems to think it is, for Christian conservatives to protest against pornography, especially when the material depicts abuse of women and children? Is "reproductive freedom" necessarily "progressive" for women? (Sidney Callahan and Margaret O'Brien Steinfels have argued compellingly to the contrary.) And is a living wage tenable or even possible without worker control of production? Add the obligatory nods to "diversity," "tolerance," and "pluralism," and Hart's progressivism looks pretty much like the Democratic Party at prayer.

The banality of Hart's progressivism is related to the conceptual fatigue of what he calls "faith" or "religion." Though Hart clearly admires and even envies Christian conservatives, he's just as clearly unwilling to attribute their solidarity and success to a coherent theological vision. Obviously, Hart's laudable desire to encourage ecumenical activism depends on refraining from claims of "exclusiveness." But his reluctance to develop a more sophisticated approach to differences leads him, as it does other religious progressives, both to evade the real conflicts entailed by theology—the abortion controversy being only one—and to stamp an uncritical imprimatur on an agenda drawn up mainly by the secular left. It's a hard thing to write, given Hart's evident earnestness and experience, but his book tells us why the social gospel has become not just confused but boring. The lack of a theology distinctive and imaginative enough to inform an alternative politics is the fundamental intellectual challenge to a new Christian left.

Hart's theological tepidness reflects the consumerism—wholly unmentioned in this book—that forms the chief cultural obstacle to any sort of popular democratic left. It's no coincidence that "choice" is a keyword in the lexicon of abortion rights and corporate advertising, for in both cases the substantive issue of the goods (or evils) chosen might restrict the "lifestyle" market. This pervasive commodification of consciousness indicates why Bellah and Putnam are more reliable guides than Wolfe is to the dilapidated state of American civil society.

The triumph of "choice" and proceduralism in American life as well as American progressivism favors bureaucracy, expertise, and technical prowess, all of which are ever more concentrated in the corporation. This explains, I think, why Gore's liberal supporters could be adamant about "choice" and unconcerned about corporate power. It clarifies how a purely proceduralist—hence managerial and consumerist—conception of morality can inspire such passion. And it illuminates how a "democratic" (and not always "progressive") party can appear so elitist: because it is. □

Eugene McCarraher *is an assistant professor of humanities at Villanova University. In the spring, he will be a visiting lecturer in the religion department at Princeton.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

ter to you in the hopes that it be published in my favorite magazine.

All the pros and cons of embryonic stem-cell research revolve around the presumption of human life appearing at the moment of conception. True it is that this fertilized egg, this zygote, has all the physical potential and essentials of human life. But has it also been endowed by our creator with a spiritual center, a soul, at this moment? The most powerful microscope in existence cannot, nor ever will be able, to answer this question.

Textbooks on embryology state that about 40 percent of all fertilized eggs never get implanted in a mother's endometrium, but are washed out with the next menses. Would an all-wise, all-knowing creator endow a morula of some twenty-four to ninety-six cells with a soul before it gets safely implanted in a loving

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mother's womb? I think not. I believe this ensoulment occurs only after implantation, some seven to eight days after conception.

Our Catholic Church has never issued a definitive statement on the time of ensoulment, and probably never will. If this gut feeling of mine were ever accepted by the church, there would never be any controversy over embryonic stem-cell research. There would never be any controversy over taking a "morning after" pill to prevent an unwanted pregnancy in the case of rape or incest.

It is my hope that this letter will stimulate articles on ensoulment—maybe by Sidney Callahan and her husband, who will write much more authoritatively and fluently than this octogenarian.

BERNARD L. KREILKAMP, M.D.
Mercer Island, Wash.

Humility needed

Thank you for the editorial, columns, and letters on stem-cell research. It is a profoundly important matter.

The bishops have stated that human life begins at the moment that sperm and ovum connect successfully in the petri dish. I can accept that, but I would like to read it to mean, "We don't know enough about when human life begins, so out of an abundance of caution we are selecting the earliest possible moment, but we are open to exploration, because history has taught us that we have much to learn about the world in which God placed us."

Sidney Callahan wonders whether we have stepped onto a slippery slope ["Philosopher on Call," September 14]. Perhaps. My reaction to in vitro fertilization was delight that those who wanted a child could now bear and rear one. It seemed a small and happy step in mankind's growth in understanding and taking responsibility for the world.

So, haltingly we understand more of God's wonders and "work" them for moral ends. I am now struggling with the realization that I have not been outraged by the fact that extra embryos were created and that, in some way, they were discarded. What gives me pause is the realization that I (and apparently many others) had not equated them with human beings. Was I wrong? I agree with Garvey that if they were implanted and if they took, they would not become cabbages. They can only become human beings. But even he has to add that big "if." Your editorial ["The Stem-cell Sell," August 17] suggested that they "were not human persons." What I conclude from this is that some humility is in order. The fertilized ovum in a petri dish has the potential for human life, but is it at that point a "human" being, with all the implications of that conclusion, or is it one small but morally huge step away? I don't know, and it appears to me that those who say unequivocally otherwise are making a judgment on limited information.

JOHN W. WEISER
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Send your résumé and three references to: Catholic Chaplain Search Committee, California Catholic Conference, 1119 K Street, Second Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Director Needed

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS, **Institute for Ministry invites applications** for the position of Director. Qualifications include a terminal degree in theology, religion, education, religious education, or field appropriate for practical theology; a record of successful administrative experience and collaborative leadership; teaching experience and scholarship, preferably in ministry; a member of the Roman Catholic community, familiar with contemporary Roman Catholic theology. The Director's primary responsibilities are the administrative and financial management of the Institute for Ministry and the academic oversight of all programs. The Institute is located within City College at Loyola University New Orleans. The Institute offers Master's degrees in Pastoral Studies and Religious Education, both on-campus and in a distance learning format, with theological and pedagogical commitments to practical theology and adult education. Application letter, résumé, three reference letters, and an official transcript of highest degree should be addressed to: Chair, LIM Director Search Committee; Loyola University, Box 16; 6363 Saint Charles Avenue; New Orleans, LA 70118. Applications will be accepted until December 1, 2001, or until position is filled. Position available Summer 2002. Loyola University is an AA/EO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Please visit our Web site at *www.loyno.edu/lim.*

Full-Time Director

THE DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN, seeks a Full-Time Director of the Office of Catholic Schools. The Director of Catholic Schools assists the Bishop in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Catholic education programs in Diocesan elementary and secondary schools. The Director carries out a pivotal role in the work of the seven unified Catholic school systems. The Director collaborates with the Director of Catechesis in the operation of the Department of Catholic Education; monitors compliance of diocesan Catholic schools with diocesan policies, and issues directives for their application; provides consultation to parishes and deaneries on the administrative organization of Catholic schools; and assists local pastoral authorities in the recruitment and hiring of administrators of Catholic schools. The Director gives final approval to the hiring of all administrators. Qualifications: a person in full communion with the Catholic Church, graduate degree in educational administration, with related studies in sacred theology, and teaching, and administrative experience in Catholic schools. Send letter of introduction, résumé, and three letters of recommendation to *The Reverend Richard W. Gilles, Moderator of the Curia, P.O. Box 4004, La Crosse, WI 54602-4004* by **October 26, 2001.**

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THE INNOCENTS

Paul Elie

The toxic fumes were heavy, the traffic funereally light. I rode my bicycle up New York's Tenth Avenue and cut in toward the church. In my backpack I had a Jerusalem Bible and a Kryptonite lock. Around my neck I had a yellow T-shirt, pulled up over my nose and mouth as though I were a pirate, not a lay preacher trying to find a few hundred words for catastrophe.

I was on the way to the weekly meeting of the Community of Sant'Egidio in a church on Manhattan's West Side. The community's story has already been told in these pages (see November 18, 1994): its founding in Rome after the worldwide student uprisings of 1968; its growth to thirty thousand members in Italy and another thirty thousand abroad; its mediation during civil wars in Africa; its nightly meetings in Santa Maria in Trastevere, which make the ancient Roman basilica seem like a neighborhood church again.

Our group in New York has half-a-dozen members. We arrange folding chairs in a semicircle in the far corner of the church, beneath a spotlit mosaic of Christ proffering his Sacred Heart. We sing, recite, pray, and petition the Lord—though the expression seems awfully grand for our petitions, which we read from Xeroxed fliers now worn as soft as vellum. One of us reads a Bible text and gives a brief commentary on it.

Wednesday, September 12, it was my turn to preach. The day before, terrorists had struck the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the city was staggering. The offices where I work had been closed. Police had cordoned off the downtown neighborhood where I live, and the streets were quiet, expectant. At home, stunned like everybody else, I browsed in the Bible.

Now, in the church, I read the biblical text I'd chosen: Matthew, chapter 2, verses one through eighteen—the Massacre of the Innocents. I explained why I had chosen it. People on the street were comparing the Trade Center blast to Armageddon. The airwaves were crowded with God-talk. The mayor, fumbling for words of succor at a press conference, had suggested that God's will was somehow behind those who got out alive. Before long lawyers would be invoking the "act of God" clause in insurance policies and breached contracts. It seemed wise to avoid speaking too confidently about God just now.

Better to speak of the Massacre of the Innocents. For that, all the evidence suggests, is what it was. A powerful man ordered the deaths of thousands of innocent people to further his own ends, just as King Herod did after the Christ child was born.

The Catholic faith is oriented around the notion that death ultimately makes sense. Death is not the end of life. Death is the way each of us shares the experience of God, the way God shared our experience in dying for us. Death for the sake of another is the most complete self-sacrifice this life has to offer.

That seems to me to be a reason why the deaths of several hundred firefighters and police officers brought such an outpouring of emotion in the days after the catastrophe. Those deaths conformed to the Christian pattern of supreme self-sacrifice. The firefighters, as they hastened toward the flames, were ready to give their lives for others.

But what of the thousands of ordinary people who died in the explosions, the flames, the abrupt collapsings of the towers? No religious person, it seems to me, would presume to say that those deaths made sense or served any higher purpose.

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Better to speak of the Massacre of the Innocents. The Gospels, biblical scholars say, communicate through the arrangement and juxtaposition of texts as much as through the texts themselves. So it is in this episode. On page two of the New Testament we encounter swift and pointless mass death. No sooner is a child born than a thousand others are murdered. One has only to imagine the pain of those firstborn male children as they were killed or the anguish their families felt to know that there is no way to say such deaths make sense.

Matthew's Gospel, thankfully, does not ascribe the massacre to any divine plan. Rather, it places those deaths in a kind of counterpoint with Christ's death. The implication, theologically, is that only through a death like Christ's can such deaths be avenged, such wrongs set right. But the implication for our lives, it seems to me, is that only through a life like Christ's can such wrongs be righted, such senseless deaths set in counterpoint.

The biblical Massacre of the Innocents now has a new set of references. Last month, the innocents were office workers in Manhattan; this month, they are people ruled by despots in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The character of the "war on terrorism" will likely depend on how far our president is allowed to stretch the notions of "combatants" and "intention" and "collateral damage," indeed of "innocent" and "guilty," so as to avoid having to bear responsibility for the taking of innocent lives. Will he, will we, be more like Christ, or more like Herod? He, and we, will have to decide. The fate of the innocents, those still alive and those already dead, depends on it. □

Paul Elie, *a frequent* Commonweal *contributor, is an editor at Farrar, Straus & Giroux.*

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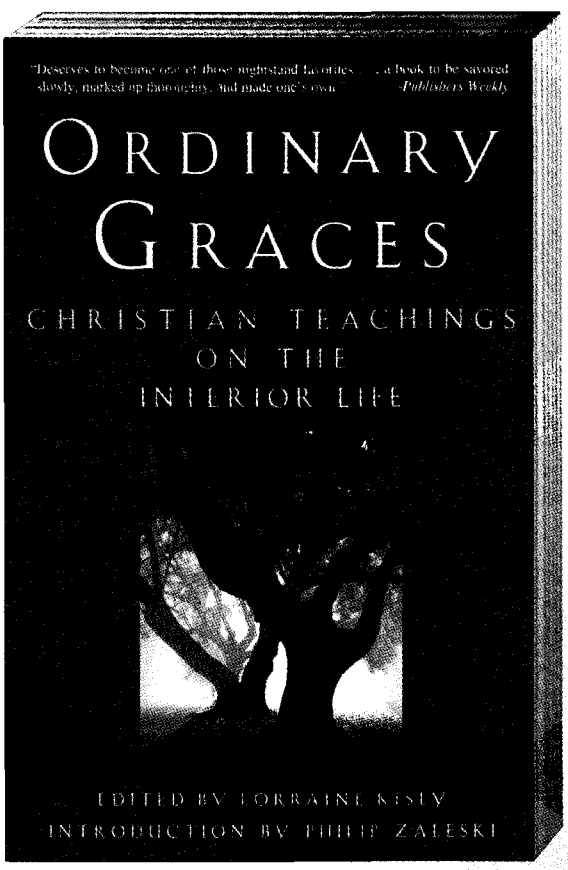
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